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When I scheduled the content for this issue of *Metalsmith*, in what I've been colloquially referring to as "the before time," I was thinking about the theme of in-betweenness; or, if you prefer academic jargon, liminality; or, for those familiar with Hinduism, what the *Upanishads* term "neti neti," a compound of the words *na* and *iti*, meaning "not this, not that." As the COVID-19 crisis escalated, and Americans began to shelter in place, I worried that when the issue was in hand it might have the feeling of cut flowers gone limp, and what was vibrant and poetic in "the before time" would feel out of touch in the present. However, after mulling it over, I accepted that, in some instances, the relevance of pondering in-betweenness is actually amplified.

For example, when I invited Carina Shoshtary to share her investigation of contemporary masks (*LOOK: Fashion for Bank Robbers*), the intention was to highlight a niche mode of contemporary adornment. I could not have anticipated the attention and ubiquity masks would come to inhabit in our daily lives, with many people making their own out of necessity.

Readers will notice a slight shift in approach to both *In Production* and *In the Studio*. In the former, D Wood speaks with Alice McLean of McLean Bronze about moving forward after the sudden passing of her husband and creative and business partner, Jack McLean. In the latter, Marie-Eve G. Castonguay peels back the curtain of the shared lives, but separate practices, of jewelry artists Sylvia Walz and Ramón Puig Cuyàs. Both highlight the whisper-thin spaces between the disciplines of partners in life and art, whether they intentionally intertwine or merely bump up against one another.

Andrea DiNoto's interview with Ira Sherman, whose works are neither jewelry, nor clothing, but reliant upon the body to fulfill their conceptual functions, highlights issues of consent, power, control, and autonomy. The artists in Mary Fissell and Mary Raivel's *Coming of Age* find themselves in a chasm when it comes to opportunities for exposure and recognition. In *Truth and Rumors*, Donna Mason Sweigart offers context for Nancy Moyer's jewelry, which draws imagery from her locale in perhaps the most literal example of in-between-ness: the Texas/Mexico border.

As I write these words, in the in-between space between "the before time" and whatever comes after, many of us are anxiously awaiting the return of certainty. Perhaps by the time this issue arrives to you, one hopes, there will be a clearer sense of the path forward. I'd like to extend an invitation to you to share how the current situation is affecting your community or you as an individual. Whether you are a student, an educator, an artist, a gallerist or curator, a hobbyist, an enthusiast...no matter where you fall in the spectrum of the field, as I sit socially distanced, I would like to connect with you. (editor@snagmetalsmith.org) ***—Adriane Dalton, Editor***

The mission of *Metalsmith* is to explore, analyze, promote, and document excellence and innovation in the field of jewelry and metalsmithing. In achieving this goal, SNAG will produce and oversee the direction and content of a publication that will serve as a significant resource for the metalsmithing field. The editorial content of *Metalsmith* will emphasize contemporary activities, makers, and ideas and incorporate supportive content, relevant critical issues, and the exchange of viewpoints.

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ONE WORLD

40 ARTISTS RESPOND TO COVID-19
AN ONLINE EXHIBITION
SPRING - SUMMER 2020

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Metalsmith Tech
Volume 3, Issue 1 / Spring 2020

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Due to challenges resulting from COVID-19, *Metalsmith Tech* volume 3 will be delivered digitally.

If you are a SNAG member, digital subscriber, or combined print and digital subscriber, the digital issues will be sent as they always are: via an email from info@snagmetalsmith.org entitled "Your New Issue of Metalsmith is Now Available!" A reminder: the digital version of *Metalsmith* and *Metalsmith Tech* are combined as a single, downloadable pdf or can be viewed in your browser.

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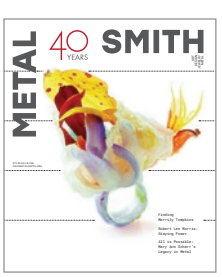
Martha Glenny
Bowled Over Blake, 1998
Sterling silver,
14k yellow gold
50 mm diameter
Photo: Digital by Design



Metalsmith 40.1 /
Winter 2020

CORRECTIONS AND UPDATES

[In the Studio, *Metalsmith* issue 40.1, pg. 21] The image of Julia Walter's *Dreamer* necklace is courtesy Oh My Blue Gallery in Venice, Italy.

[LOOK, *Metalsmith* issue 40.1, pg. 22] The image caption incorrectly lists Michele Cohen's title; it should read: Michele Cohen, Chair, Board of Trustees, Museum of Arts and Design and LOOT co-chair.

Due to the impact of COVID-19, *LOOT: MAD About Jewelry* is postponed until the week of December 7, 2020.

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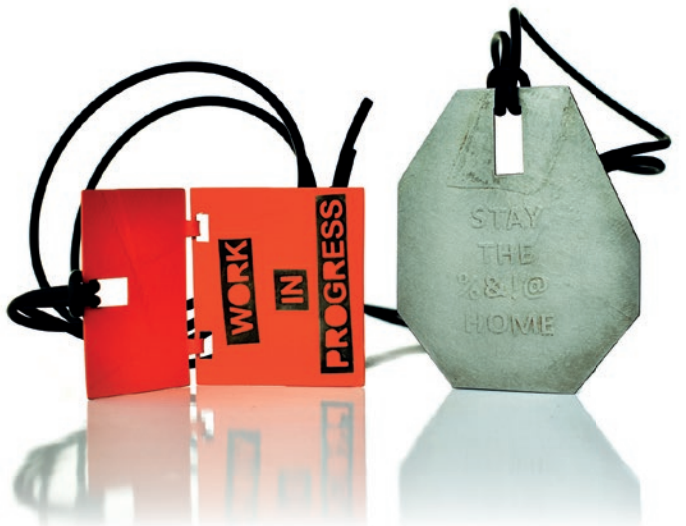

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- Call for entries: **Alchemy6** International Juried Exhibitions (entry deadline Jan. 2021)

Please consider joining the Society or renewing your membership.

Caruso Flora
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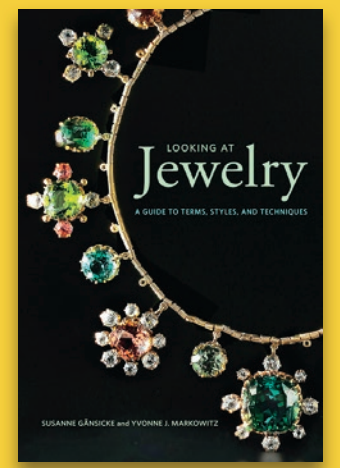

Looking at Jewelry
A Guide to Terms, Styles, and Techniques

Susanne Gänsicke and Yvonne J. Markowitz

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—Jewellery History Today

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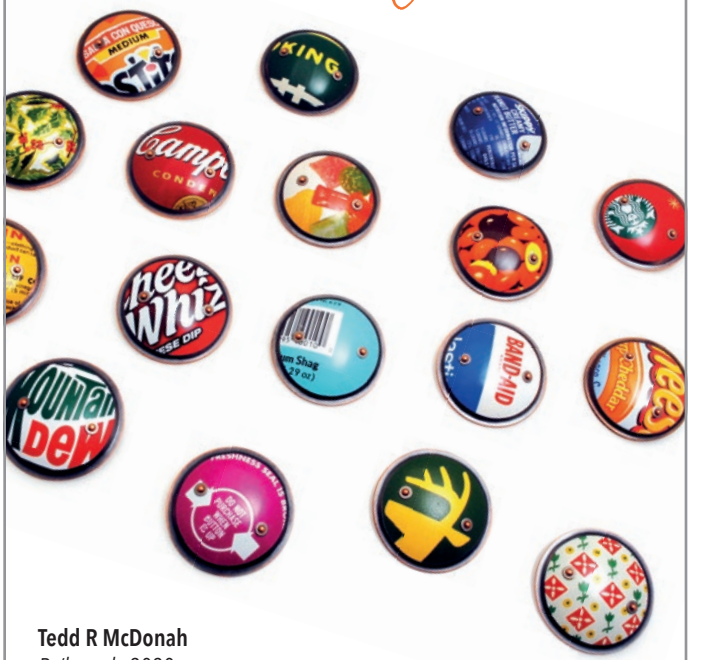
Some Lowbrow for your Lapel!



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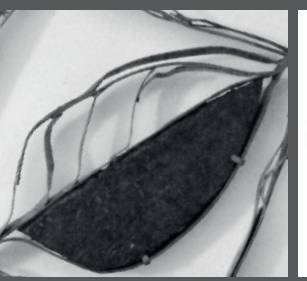
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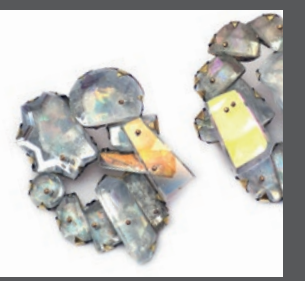
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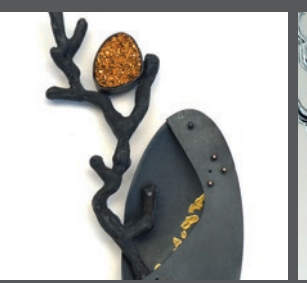
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NEW & NOTEWORTHY

BY SASHA NIXON

FACE JEWELRY: THE FUTURE AND IDENTITY

Face jewelry is experiencing a resurgence across disciplines, as artists and designers react to the overwhelming presence of technology in our lives, and our need to represent ourselves and our identity in an evolving digital world.

Face jewelry includes any ornament that falls primarily in front of or around the eyes, nose, and mouth of the wearer. It has a long history, arising independently in a multitude of cultures around the world and across human civilization. Contemporary jewelry artists and designers have periodically explored face jewelry as a powerful mode of body modification, but the form has never taken hold in contemporary art and design with the same explosive popularity as it has recently.

Mask designer **Nikita Replyanski**'s *Cyberwarrior/ Neuromask* collaboration with **Semmi Djabrail** (model), styled by **Alina Artey**, make-up artist **Polina Elagina**, clothing by **Hypnographic**. Photo: Danil Yaroshuk
Image courtesy of Nikita Replayanksi

Jonathan Wahl, the director of the 92nd Street Y's jewelry and metalsmithing program in New York City, considers adorning the body, including the face, "a human impulse." The 92Y recently hosted Estonian jeweler Claudia Lepik as artist in residence. She focuses on creating face jewelry objects that simultaneously attract attention and allow the wearer to hide from view. Concealment and transformation are frequent themes found in face jewelry, especially by those artists interacting with technology and the digital in their work.

Some artists like Carina Shoshtary combine the handmade with technology. As part of her "Hunter" project, Shoshtary creates fantastical wearable masks of mythical beasts by hand drawing with a 3D printing pen. She embeds materials like fossilized shark teeth and barnacles inside organic and highly textured structures. The final pieces transform the wearer into a creature that vibrates between flora and fauna and who would be at home inside Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The images that she creates of these pieces, and posts on Instagram, become a potent part of the work itself, creating a digital space populated by fey.[1]

The blending of the physical and digital worlds is also where personal identities converge. The constant influx of content from the internet makes tracking down the origin of an idea difficult. This means that, with the increased access to information, concept and appropriation need to be carefully considered. Wahl says, "In general, we need to slow down and stop swiping so fast. Otherwise we will be just making images and not taking the time to read about what those images mean, other than thinking, 'That looks cool.'" This friction between human autonomy and technology inspires artists who generate face jewelry that aims to enhance individual power.

The *Incognito* headpiece by Polish designer Ewa Nowak covers key areas of the wearer's face. It was created to confuse facial recognition software, and provide security against digital observation. This piece addresses the growing fear of constant surveillance, as cybersecurity and data mining of personal information spreads.

Russian wearable tech designer Nikita Replyanski's collaboration with Semmi Djabrail, *Cyberwarrior/ Neuromask*, explores futuristic non-invasive neural interface devices as fashion accessories.[2] Through these powerful pieces, Replyanski proposes a future in which humans meld with such devices to achieve telepathy, telekinesis, and even teleportation. As design concept masks, they exist both as 3D printed objects and as social media filters. Functioning as jewelry and a form of armor, they appear to be from a cyber-infused future, empowering the wearer to access abilities only dreamed of in science fiction.[3]

Other creatives, such as French artist Ines Marzat (Ines Alpha online), have submerged themselves entirely in the digital, creating custom 3D makeup filters that blur the line between makeup, jewelry, and fantasy. These filters allow users to manipulate how their identity is projected in the larger digital realm. The popularity and increasing availability of digital face jewelry filters created by artists is a result of the growing desire to express individual agency through the representation of one's digital form, transforming the avatar from sophisticated clipart into an elegant yet fantastical expression of individuality. Digital artists have taken the idea behind the homogenizing filters created en masse for apps like Snapchat or Instagram, and stepped beyond novelty and vanity by applying artistic intent, attention to detail, and expressiveness. Their vision allows people to create avatars that are something "other," digital beings who can travel the cyber world with ornaments suitable for their new environment, unfettered by the laws of physics.

Ewa Nowak
Incognito, 2018
Image courtesy of the artist

UNEARTHING EVOLUTION: A PREHISTORIC BRACELET

An ancient stone bracelet recently found inside the Denisova cave in Siberia's Altai Mountains has provided a tantalizing clue that, at the dawn of humanity, hominins other than *Homo sapiens* could have independently developed body adornment. The bracelet is carved from chlorite, a semi-translucent green stone. New studies suggest that the piece was made by Denisovans, which are a species or subspecies of homo that shared a common ancestor with Neandertal and *Homo sapien* about one million years ago.[4] If this proves to be the case, it would change the established view of cultural evolution.

After years of excavation and study, several teams of paleoanthropologists determined that the cave was inhabited intermittently by Neandertals and Denisovans. Radio-carbon dating of bone tools found in the same archaeological layer date the bracelet to between 43,000 to 49,000 years ago, making it the oldest known of its kind.[5]

Two studies published in the January 30, 2019, issue of *Nature* have helped solidify the timeline of occupation for the Denisova cave. The studies confirmed that Denisovans and Neandertals occupied the cave intermittently from 200,000 to 50,000 years ago, with Denisovans being both the first and last inhabitants of the cave.[6] Though no Denisovan bones have been discovered in the late layers—where the bracelet was found—and as they were the last to vacate the cave based on existing evidence, and there is no evidence of prehistoric modern humans in the area, they are the most likely group to have created the bracelet.

Marks on the stone have helped illuminate the techniques used and how the bracelet was worn. Making a bracelet such as the one found required techniques and technology previously ascribed to modern humans after the Paleolithic era. Anatoliy Derevyanko, Scientific Leader at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, told *The Siberian Times* that easel speed drilling, a boring tool rasp, grinding, and polishing with leather and skins were used. Polish around a small hole drilled into the wider band of the bracelet has been interpreted by specialists as wear created by a leather strap with a weighty pendant attached. The directionality of this polished area indicates that the bracelet was worn on the right wrist. The chlorite the bracelet is made from is not found in the area surrounding the cave and would have been imported. Because of the rarity and fragility of the stone, it is thought to have been worn only on special occasions by a member of the elite. The small size of the bracelet indicates it was worn by a woman or child.[7]

Derevyanko described the importance of several items with apparent symbolic significance found in the cave, including the stone bracelet. Objects such as these hint at social hierarchies, sophisticated technology, and culturally significant events. According to Derevyanko, until their discovery, "it was believed these were the hallmark of the emergence of *Homo sapiens*."

This bracelet is a significant addition to the mounting evidence that points toward the independent development of body adornment not only in modern humans but also in Neandertals, *Homo erectus*, and—now—Denisovans.

Sasha Nixon is an independent curator, jewelry historian, and metalsmith. She is a member of the Museum of Arts and Design's Exhibition Design and Installation team and a critic at the Rhode Island School of Design. She was awarded the 2017 Society of North American Goldsmiths' Emerging Curators Grant.

1 Instagram handle @carinashoshtary / **2** Non-invasive neural interface devices are technological aids that can interact with and enhance brain functions through sensors applied to the skin. / **3** Replyanski's Instagram filters of the masks can be found at https://replyanski.onuniverse.com / **4** Alla Katsnelson, "New hominin found via mtDNA," in *The Scientist*, March 24, 2010. / **5** Kate Wong, "Cave that Housed Neandertals and Denisovans Challenges View of Cultural Evolution," in *Scientific American*, January 30, 2019. / **6** Katerina Douka, "The Long Road to Denisova Cave," in *Nature*, January 30, 2019.; Zenobia Jacobs, "Life and Times of the Denisovans," in *Nature*, January 30, 2019. / **7** "Bracelet May Have Been Made by Denisovans," May 7, 2015. https://www.archaeology.org/news/3270-150507-siberia-denisovan-bracelet

TWO TO ONE: THE EVOLUTION OF McLEAN BRONZE

BY D WOOD

Jack and Alice McLean
Highwater Strongbox (closed and opened), 1996
Bronze, hot patina
9 x 5 x 5 in.
Photo: Larry Berman

COLLABORATION—I.E., WORKING TOGETHER—implies physical proximity. As John Lennon said about his partnership with Paul McCartney: "We wrote a lot of stuff together, one on one, eyeball to eyeball."

The same was true of artists Christo and his long-time partner Jeanne-Claude and their wrapping projects, which they began in 1961. When Jeanne-Claude died unexpectedly in 2009, the couple was working on ventures that had been anticipated for some time, including a series of fabric panels to be suspended over the Arkansas River in Colorado. Christo spent twenty years, with and without his partner, attempting to execute *Over the River*. No one would question Jeanne-Claude's collaboration on the project, even though their vision wasn't abandoned until 2017, years after her passing.

Alice McLean is in a similar situation to Christo's. Her husband, Jack McLean, a respected bronze sculptor to whom she was married for almost forty years, died suddenly in 2017. In addition to actively collaborating with Jack in his studio for the majority of his career, she handled administration and marketing, and shared duties at the many art fairs and exhibitions in which they participated. When Alice lost Jack, she was forced to accept the void in her life and family, as well as consider the future for McLean Bronze.

Jack created two- and three-dimensional forms that referenced buildings and containers; his kinetic pieces with wheels, hinges, and unfolding openings were delightful, enigmatic, and enduring. He specialized in hot process patinas, giving his *oeuvre* an appealing earth-toned palette. Alice, who studied literature and dance at the National College of Education in Chicago, was abundantly familiar with Jack's process and enjoyed it. When she became unhappy in her career as a teacher, she stepped into Jack's studio to try her hand at metalwork.

Whereas Alice was adept at teaching, Jack was not. Alice says, "He wasn't a formal teacher. We would both put on our welding helmets or air packs for hot process patinas and he would try and talk me through welding a seam or brushing chemicals onto hot metal. This was

Jack and Alice McLean
Little Wheelhouse For Those Who Love Action, 1993
Bronze, patina, beads, steel wheels
14 x 12 x 6 in.
Photo: Jack McLean

frustrating for both of us. It was second nature to him, and machines [arc welder, sander, grinder] were not second nature to me. Ultimately I think I simply absorbed the knowledge because we worked side by side for so many years. We didn't need words."

Alice describes her eventual collaboration on her spouse's work: "Jack would fabricate the piece—a vessel or a box or a building. A hot process patina means that the metal needs to stay hot in order to brush those chemicals on and oxidize the metal. With a really large piece it's almost impossible to keep the whole thing hot while one person's working. Jack would be on one side of a building, say, with a propane torch brushing on metals while I was on the other side doing the same thing. The piece was on a turntable and we would spin it so that the patina was even." When Alice eventually got her own studio, she would interrupt her activity, carry her equipment to Jack's premises, and partake in the chemical application.

Another type of McLean alliance involved the small sculptures called *Bronze Still Life* tiles. Alice states: "I would fabricate the center of the piece and drill it into the plate. It would go to Jack who would do some patinas on the plate. It would come back to me and I'd do a patina on the center. We'd put it together and then the piece would move back and forth between our studios again and again as we collaborated on the final design." Alice viewed these as true collaborations because the process and the creative outcome were mutual endeavors.

During Jack's lifetime, Alice's own work was confined to the wall tiles and small dories. She didn't try to develop something that was uniquely hers because she says, "I didn't feel I had the skill; I wasn't sure I was confident with my aesthetic; and I felt like his helper." Even though the collaborations were "fluid," she was aware that the design sensibility was Jack's. After he died, Alice knew she had to make a living, and says it took her about a year to master even the simple tasks that Jack had done with efficiency. During that time, she also addressed her fear that she couldn't take McLean Bronze forward by herself.

Now Alice confesses to being able to "relax" about her practice. Her formerly methodical approach to technique and sensibility is now more akin to Jack's intuitive one. She is open to letting the metal, chemicals, and fire—the process—determine design, color, and result. And she senses Jack's presence giving permission and encouragement.

Over the next few years Alice feels she will experiment with her own imagery and aesthetic. Her publication of the book *Jack McLean: A Dialogue with Materials* in 2019 and subsequent retrospectives are milestones in the loss of her significant other, ones she believes are symbolic of letting go. Yet, despite being on her own, Alice McLean will always be collaborating with her husband, mentor, friend, and kindred soul, Jack.

D Wood trained as a designer/maker and has a Ph.D. in Design Studies. She is an independent craft scholar whose artist profiles and exhibition reviews have appeared in an international roster of art and design publications.

Jack and Alice McLean
Dories, 2018
Bronze, hot patina
8–12 in. long
Photo: David Rench

PARALLEL LINES: SILVIA WALZ AND RAMÓN PUIG CUYÀS

BY MARIE-EVE G. CASTONGUAY

WHILE I WAS STILL A JEWELRY STUDENT in Quebec City, I took a trip to Montreal to visit Galerie Noël Guyomarc'h for the first time. It was 2009, and artists Silvia Walz and Ramón Puig Cuyàs were featured in a dual exhibition. I was still new to the jewelry field, and had thus far been exposed mostly to traditional forms of jewelry. To me, their work redefined notions of form and technique, and its expressionist qualities opened up my mind to a new frame of possibilities.

Walz's and Puig Cuyàs's work has stuck with me and I followed their careers closely. Last fall, Galerie Noël Guyomarc'h hosted *Catalan Colors*, a retrospective exhibition celebrating thirty years of their practices. While the 2009 exhibition demonstrated the artists's shared sensibility in their formal and conceptual approaches, their artistic affinities were even more apparent when decades worth of work were presented side by side.

Since the early '90s, Walz and Puig Cuyàs have lived together as a couple, taught at the Escola Massana in Barcelona, and shared studio space. When considering how their practices developed over the decades, and the porous boundaries between the artists's lives and work, it is impossible to dismiss a certain connection and dialogue between their pieces, or the comparable sequence of changes and discoveries in their art. Placing their work along a narrative thread, I started to imagine the sinuous path of their shared life.

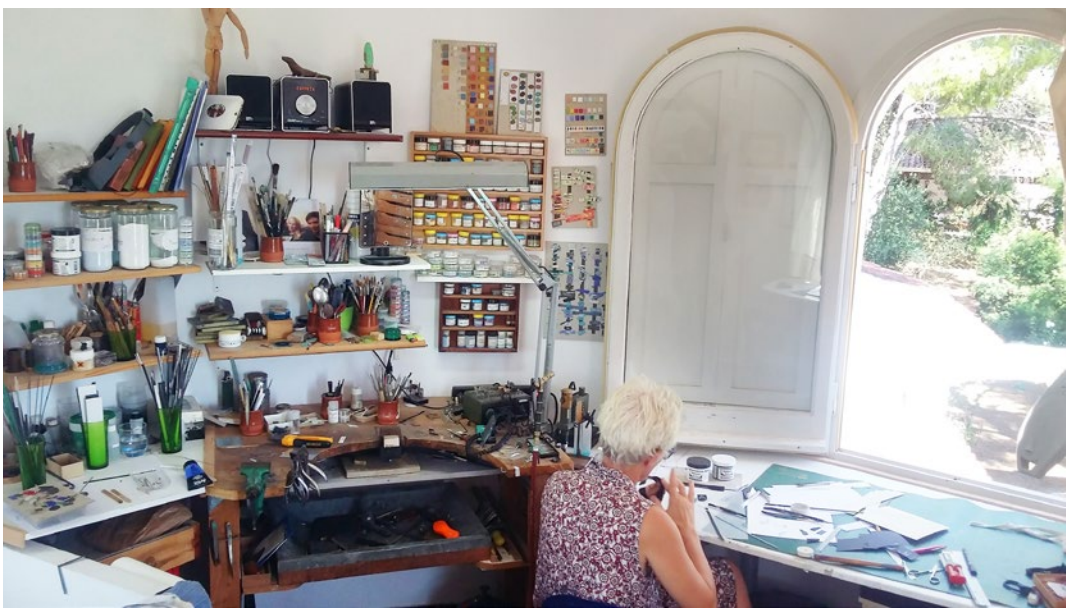
I was lucky enough to spend time with Walz and Puig Cuyàs during their recent visit to Montreal, and talk with them about their lives as partners and artists working in the same field. Sitting in the center of their exhibition at

Ramón Puig Cuyàs
Selene, No. 354 (brooch), 1990
Impressions of Atlantis series
Oxidized nickel silver, silver
60 x 150 x 10 mm
Photo by the artist

Silvia Walz
House of Trumpets (brooch), 1990
Symbols and Signs series
Alpaca, paper
90 x 50 x 10 mm
Private collection
Photo by the artist

Ramón Puig Cuyàs' studio (above) and Silvia Walz's studio (right) at their shared home in Tarragona, Spain.

Photos by
Ramón Puig Cuyàs



Galerie Noël Guyomarc'h, we had a touching conversation about their story, and the way they navigate creation and personal life. Walz and Puig Cuyàs met in Barcelona in the late '80s, when Walz was on a one-year student exchange at the Escola Massana, at which Puig Cuyàs had been teaching since 1978. Walz recalled that she was not drawn to jewelry while studying at the University of Applied Arts and Sciences in Hildesheim, Germany. "When I came to Barcelona," she recounts, "I discovered another set of possibilities in jewelry making, and developed an interest in this medium."

As for Puig Cuyàs, he recognized in Walz an echo of his personal philosophy of contemporary jewelry: "When we say contemporary, it means everything that shares the culture of this moment," he says. "Other types of jewelry, or conventional jewelry, are anachronistic to me. Each art jewelry piece is made in a specific moment; it is a reflection of that exact moment, of your deep experience of feeling alive and free. This moment is impossible to repeat. The next day will be a different moment. If you work in design, even though you are involved in the work, the moment is not as important. When you make art jewelry, you need to be involved in each moment, each second." Puig Cuyàs's proposition differs from the usual discourse on contemporary jewelry, which often

Ramón Puig Cuyàs
No. 613 (brooch), 1998
Archipelagos series
Silver, nickel silver, wood, glass, paper, coral, pearl, acrylic paint
65 x 65 x 15 mm
Private collection
Photo by the artist

focuses on meaning and concepts over material value. Instead, Puig Cuyàs directs his attention on the conditions of making, a vision that is echoed in the expressionist nature of his work. Expressionism is in fact an approach that defines both Puig Cuyàs's and Walz's work, as they provide a visual response to their lived experience.

On one hand, Puig Cuyàs creates visual metaphors expressing the precarious equilibrium through which humans interact with their surrounding world, and his works are imbued with metaphysical and philosophical concepts. On the other hand, Walz evokes the spiritual realm in a humorous way, using a language that references the playfulness of the surrealist movement. Even though the language they use to address their topics does not share the same level of rationalism, the artists share the same sensitivity to how people interact with each other and with their surroundings. But even more importantly, they share the same fascination for the unexplainable, the abstract, the mysterious. Their works act as potential solutions to enigmatic questions.

If we look back at the pieces they created in the early '90s, such as Puig Cuyàs's *Selene* and Walz's *House of Trumpets*, obvious visual elements knit together their work. During that decade especially, a parallel series of transitions are noticable in the artists' practices. First, both favored wireframe structures, in which volume is suggested through the use of negative space. This can be seen in Puig Cuyàs's series *Impressions of Atlantis* and Walz's series *Histories*, which were both created around the mid-'90s. Later in the decade, both artists started introducing defined background surfaces on which eclectic assortments of forms are arranged in a collage-like approach. For Puig Cuyàs, this transition started with his series *Archipelagos*, and evolved in his subsequent series *Walled Gardens*, *Imago Mundi*, and *Utopos*. As for Walz, she began to work on the series *Ikarus*, followed by the series *Recollect*. In a similar collage-like approach, she started creating intriguing compositions laid on the defined space of a backplane, with various elements that evoke place and people.

The evolution of both artists' work happened almost simultaneously, as if they had together decided to take on these new directions. I was prompted to ask them about the input they have in each other's practice, and how they navigate individual and shared spaces in their work-life environment. Is it natural for two artists who are also partners in life to undergo such parallel evolutions in their practices?

The artists have worked under the same roof ever since Walz relocated to Catalonia, and even shared the same studio space until two years ago, when they purchased their house in Tarragona. "We now have separate studios," says Walz. "I am downstairs and Ramón is upstairs, and we meet in the middle." Before then, their shared studio had been attached to their house, with their benches facing opposite directions. Working from home was crucial in order to pursue an artistic career while raising children, explains Walz. "We

Silvia Walz
23rd of May (brooch), 2002
Recollect series
Silver, textile, plastic
60 x 70 x 5 mm
Galerie Noël Guyomarc'h
Photo by the artist

Ramón Puig Cuyàs
No. 1774 (brooch), 2018
The Farewell series
Oxidized nickel silver, enamel on steel, reconstructed turquoise, obsidian and paper with alabaster, ebony, reconstructed with coral
75 x 75 x 20 mm
Private collection
Photo by the artist

try not to make a separation between life and creation," adds Puig Cuyàs. "We always looked for apartments that were large enough to hold both the studio and our living space."

Although they always aimed to navigate fluidly between creation and everyday life, they admit to keeping their practices quite private and separate, rarely dedicating time to sharing ideas or discussing each other's work. Therefore, the apparent dialogue between their work becomes even more interesting. "We inevitably influence each other in our work, but we never do it consciously," says Walz. "Perhaps we have a similar way of composing, and we both like to play." For Puig Cuyàs, their shared philosophy about contemporary jewelry is an important link between their respective works: both represent tangible, subjective responses to specific moments in time.

Although they do not directly contribute to each other's practices, Puig Cuyàs and Walz do not deny the connection between their work and their life, and the importance of their shared experiences, individually, as a couple, and as a family. "This connection is sometimes not direct, or not conscious. When I make a piece, it is a reflection of my life in this moment. But the influence of a life event sometimes comes years later. I need some time to transform memories and influences into a creative output," recounts Puig Cuyàs. "If you are not personally and emotionally involved in your own work, it becomes nothing more than formal explorations. Without your personality and your life experiences, maybe you will create nice forms, but they will be empty of meaning."

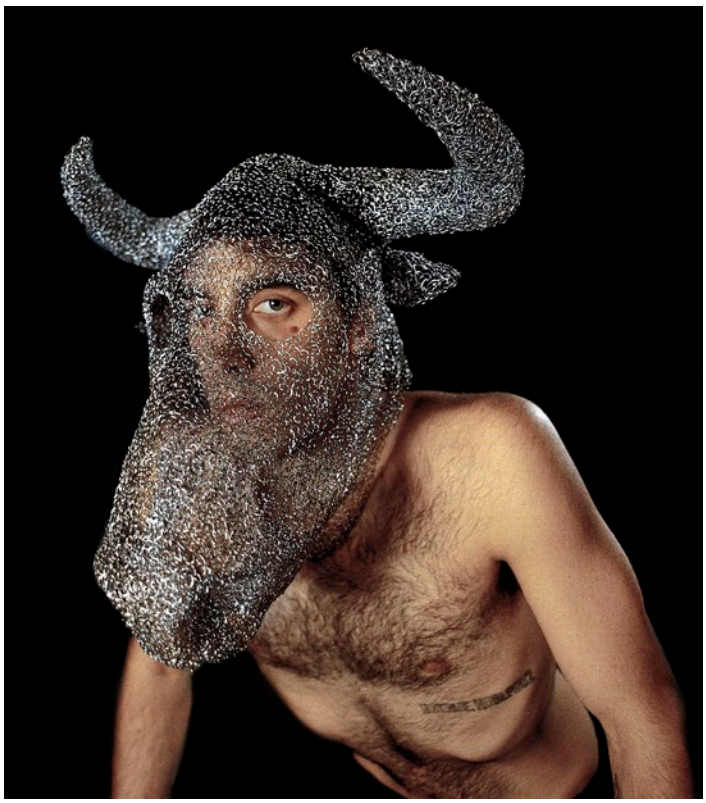
If life experiences are what inform Silvia Walz and Ramón Puig Cuyàs's work, that could explain why identifying the maker of certain pieces becomes difficult. It is a common thing for artists to draw inspiration from their personal lives—consciously or unconsciously. When life is shared by two artists, the parallels between shared experiences and the work created becomes a lens through which to see the art, and offers deeper and more complex layers of meaning.

Marie-Eve G. Castonguay is a jewelry artist, writer, and curator based in Montreal.

Silvia Walz
Brooch, 2010
Ikarus series
Silver, textile, plastic
80 x 40 x 5 mm
Photo by the artist

FASHION FOR BANK ROBBERS

BY CARINA SHOSHTARY



HAVE YOU EVER WANTED to become another person or creature, just for a little while? Putting on a mask could literally make it happen, because that is what masks do; they enable instant transformation.

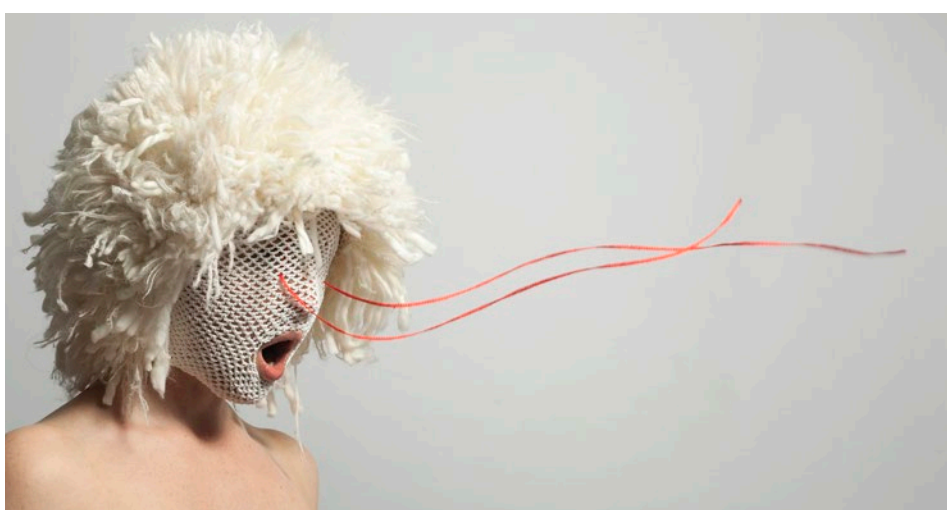
My interest in contemporary masks and headpieces began around five years ago, when I started thinking of wearable objects as a means to not only adorn, but to transfigure a person and even change their identity. Since the head and especially the face, with its physical attributes and facial expressions, is our center of both receiving and processing information about each other, the headpiece and above all the mask inevitably became the supreme discipline for me. A mask or similar head disguise offers both protection and liberation, which I find very intriguing.

Before taking on the challenge of making such pieces myself, though, I decided to do some research to get a better idea of what was happening in the field today, and to answer the question: Are masks and headpieces relevant in contemporary western society?

What I found was surprising. Masks and headpieces are celebrating a revival in the arts, popular culture, and on social media. Many runway shows have featured sculptural headpieces, elaborate face jewelry, balaclavas, or surgical masks, especially in the last two years. This headgear is often part of an apocalyptic look that might be a reflection of the air pollution and climate change crisis, or simply an expression of a rebellious mood for nonconformity. On social media the creative selfie has developed into a kind of anti-selfie, for which people break with conventional beauty ideals by applying masklike makeup or gluing objects to their faces. Artists from all kinds of fields are picking up on masks and head disguise, blurring the lines between mediums.

I chose a few images of some of my favorite pieces from @fashion_for_bank_robbers, an Instagram page I started a year and a half ago, on which I feature fantastic contemporary masks and headpieces from makers around the world. The name of the page hints at the game of disguise, and I post an image a day for those who share my love for these wonderfully quirky and otherwordly creations.

Carina Shoshtary is a contemporary art jeweler whose interest in the performing arts has led her to extend her practice into the fields of mask-making and music.



Threadstories
FalseHoods Series, 2018
Yarn
Photo: Hazel Coonagh

Opposite:
Giacomo Bevanati
Minòtauros Mask, 2018
Steel wire
Photo: Jo Fetto

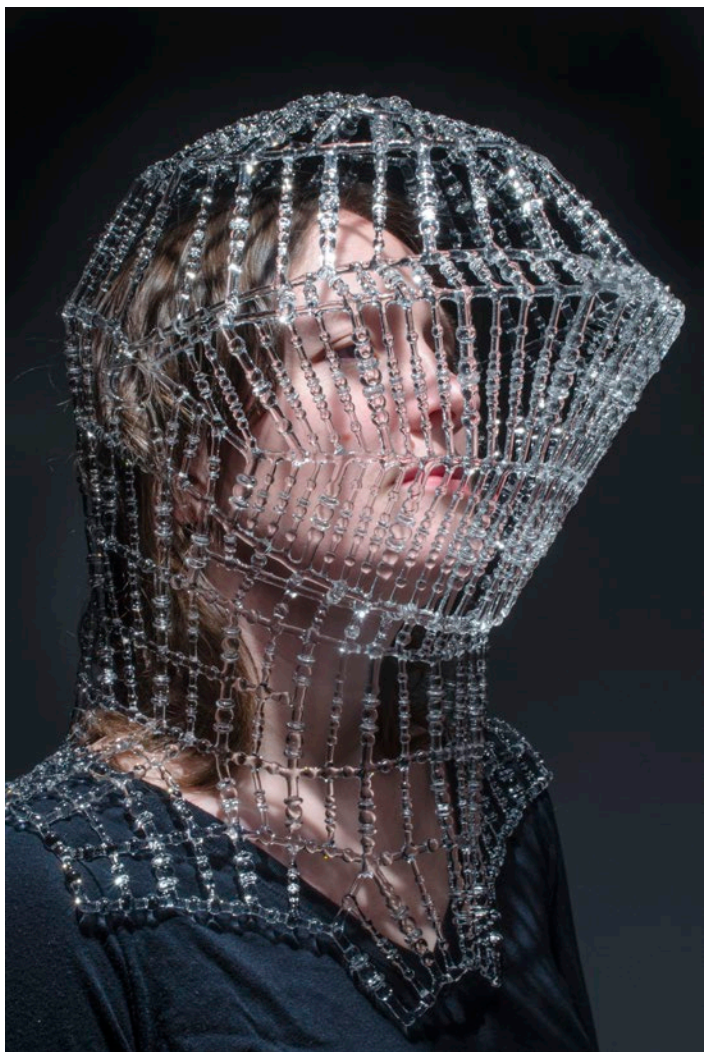
This page, clockwise from top:
Sarah T. Roberts
Counter (balance) II, 2018
Steel, rust
Photo by the artist

Alex Box
Murmur, 2019
Clay
Photo by the artist

Daisy Collingridge
Burt feels like, 2018
Hand dyed jersey,
wadding, beans, thread
Photo by the artist

James Merry
Ariel Headpiece, 2018
Hand-sculpted silicone, wire, plastic
Photo: David Abrahams

Kit Paulson
Carapace II, 2017
Borosilicate glass
Courtesy of Momentum Gallery
Photo: David Abrahams



matt lambert
Diagramming the Unravel, (Mending and breathing), 2018
Object titles: *Unrepairable [Mask 1], (N)one of them [Jersey 1], Selah [1, 8, 12]*
Unrepairable kilim, cotton, wood
Photo: Jacob Koestler

Damien Blottiere
Delfy Beugly, 2010
Collage mask made of printed paper
Photo by the artist

Below left:
Threadstories
FalseHoods Series, 2018
Collection: "The Delvin Hotel"
Yarn
Photo by the artist

Below:
Muriel Nisse
Untitled, 2018
Embroidery with human color hair, gold fiber, vintage painted lace
Photo: Damien Frost

THE WOMEN OF KUNDAN AND MEENAKARI JEWELRY

BY LAURA MARSOLEK

Preeti Kala applying enamel to a cloisonné jewelry piece.

Photo: Kuldeep Gavendra

Preeti Kala
Tulsi Kala (Kundan work)
Plique-à-jour set with floral motif, 2011
Enamel and 22k gold
3 x 1½ in., 2 x 1 in.
Photo: Kuldeep Gavendra

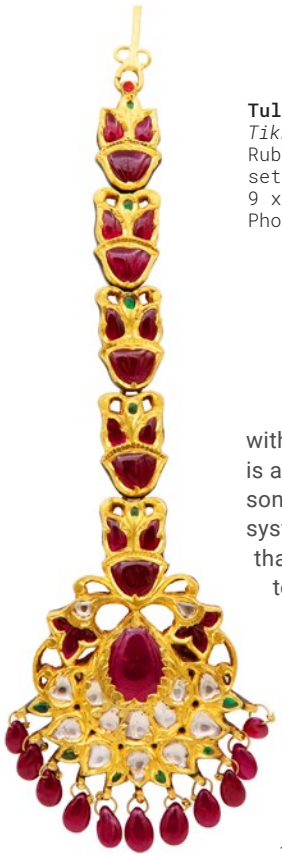
TULSI, SAROJ, AND PREETI KALA ARE RARITIES within India's male-dominated community of goldsmiths. They practice their craft in the city of Jaipur, in the state of Rajasthan, which is a hub for colored gemstones and jewelry manufacturing. Jaipur's jewelry industry is estimated to employ more than 200,000 people, yet the master craftspeople of this lucrative trade are predominantly male. India continues to adhere to strict gender roles, especially here in the northern reaches of the country. For religious and cultural reasons, India is the largest consumer of gold in the world, and being a gold jewelry manufacturer in India is a mark of wealth and social status. The owners of the prominent jewelry workshops are men, as this profession, with its dealing and trading, is thought to be better suited to them.

Together, Tulsi, Saroj, and Preeti are defying traditional gender norms and changing the mindset of Indian jewelers. Saroj makes fine ribbons of 24k gold foil known as *Kundan*, which are used by Tulsi to set rubies, emeralds, and diamonds into opulent jade adornments. Preeti practices *meenakari*, or enameling, creating jewelry pieces that incorporate traditional Indian patterns into modern forms. The women are united as family through marriage ties, and by the unusually open mentality of men who broke with tradition and trained female family members.

Tulsi first began learning the art of Kundan jewelry making in the 1980s at only fourteen years old, from her older brother Ram Chandra Kala. Kundan is an ancient Indian technique of encrusting a gold structure or surface with gemstones using thin strips of pure gold. Making the hyper-purified gold or Kundan involves heating twenty grams of gold with cow dung for four hours, and then flattening it into a long continuous ribbon that is smoothed with a wet agate stone and delicately beaten with a hammer until paper-thin. Tulsi then uses sharp iron tools to apply individual sheets of Kundan, then compacts and kneads the gold until it is fused around the outside of the gems. With great precision, she carves the gold into imaginative Moghul-inspired vegetal and floral motifs to create precious pieces of art.

When speaking about her first years learning Kundan, Tulsi claims, "There were many arguments among family members and neighbors, who didn't understand why my brother was teaching me." The goldsmiths' caste, like most traditional sects of Indian society, rigidly adheres to gender roles. Women are occupied

Tulsi Kala
Haar, 1999
Nephrite, ruby, emerald, diamond set in 24k gold with enamel and pearls
12 x 2 in.
Photo: Kuldeep Gavendra



Tulsi Kala
Tikka, 2005
Ruby, diamond, and emeralds
set in 24k gold with enamel
9 x 2.5 cm
Photo: Kuldeep Gavendra

Tulsi Kala
Ardhnarishwar, 1998,
Nephrite, sapphire,
ruby, 24k gold
8 x 6 cm
Photo: Kuldeep Gavendra

with domestic work, while the practice of jewelry is a generational art passed down from father to son. Involving women in the family apprenticeship system is cause for concern among men, who feel that their time-honored techniques are the secret to their success. "A big fear is that when a girl marries, she will share the tricks of her father's trade to her husband's family," says Preeti. "Furthermore, they see no point in teaching her. It's a waste of time, because after marriage, women must stop practicing and raise children."

Opposing views finally subsided in 1998, when Tulsi was the first female Kundan artist to be nationally recognized for her work by the Government of India with an award of excellence. She claims that it was one of her proudest moments. The piece that won her national attention was a small idol on jade with a body composed of carved ruby and emerald gems surrounded by delicately carved gold details. A devout Hindu, Tulsi credits her success to the grace of God. She has chosen to remain unmarried to focus on her craft. "After achieving national success, there was no man in the goldsmiths' community of equal or higher standing than myself," she said laughingly. Today, she is the owner of Tulsi Arts, a successful jewelry business that carries her name. She specializes in Kundan on nephrite or jade, which is considerably more difficult than Kundan on a gold frame.

Tulsi employs several family members including Saroj, her brother Ram Chandra's wife. Saroj spends hours heating and forming the ribbons of paper-thin gold needed for Kundan jewelry work. It is a process or "recipe" she has perfected in contribution to her husband's Kundan artistry. Saroj is of an older generation, and honors her role as a dutiful wife by embracing traditional female tasks. "Cooking" and preparing sustenance for

Sitting at her workbench in her home studio, Tulsi uses an iron tool to knead ribbons of kundan onto the nephrite surface.

Photos: Kuldeep Gavendra

Saroj Kala prepares a continuous ribbon of kundan by flattening it to an extreme thinness with a hammer and smoothing it with a cloth.

Photo: Kuldeep Gavendra

both craft and body typify those feminine ideals. Yet, she embraces the young craftswomen in her family, and is visibly proud to be a part of their success.

Enamel artist Preeti is married to Ram Chandra and Saroj's son, Vikram. She also hails from a Jaipur-based family of the goldsmiths' caste that is open to female training. "I am the first female in my family to learn enameling and make it the focus of my career," she says. Her father, Raj Kumar Sankit, is a nationally recognized master of *meenakari*, or champlevé enamel, in which the metal surface is engraved, creating troughs that are filled with powdered enamel and fired. With Indian *meenakari*, the enamel work remains on the back of the adornment while gems are set on the front. This combination is typical in Kundan jewelry.

Preeti Kala
Lilac Earrings, 2017
Silver, enamel
2 x 1¼ in.
Photo: Kuldeep Gavendra

"As a little girl, I remember watching my father and older brother engraving and enameling," says Preeti. When her father heard of a government-sponsored class about enameling techniques in the capital of New Delhi, he enrolled his fourteen-year-old daughter. While in the class Preeti developed a strong interest in cloisonné and plique-à-jour, techniques that are foreign to Indian enamel artisans in Jaipur, yet widely used in Western countries.

Preeti's designs mix traditional Indian enamel patterns with Western techniques. She is motivated to translate her family's traditional craft into new shapes and forms. "I wanted to do something different with enameling, and represent Indian-inspired patterns in a modern way. I also wanted to put enamel on the front of the jewelry piece, making it the focus of the adornment," she said while showing off a fan-shaped pendant of peacocks and floral patterns, which hangs from several strands of semi-precious gems. In 2005 Preeti's pendant received national recognition. She is the only female enamel artist to achieve this distinction in India.

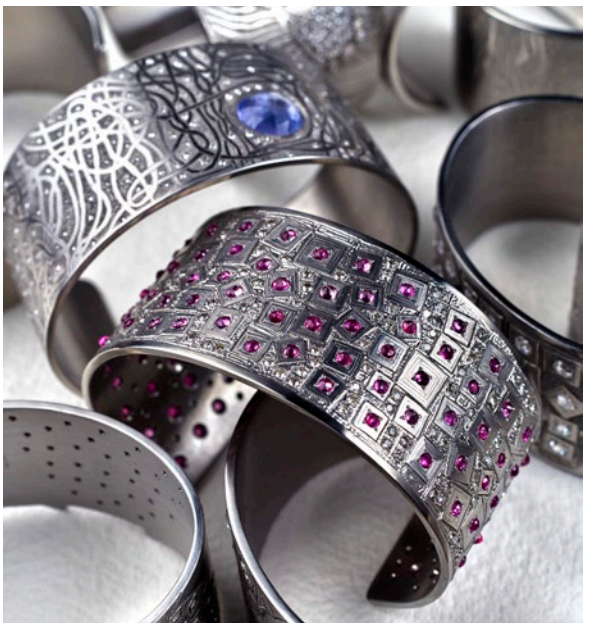
Occasionally the women collaborate on projects. Preeti designed and created a line of gold cloisonné enamel pendants with a central slice of diamond known as *polki* set with Kundan by Tulsi. Their primary community is their family. In a traditional region like Rajasthan, the culture highly values the family unit. In the goldsmith's community, a family bond is one that assures trust. For this reason, the women collaborate only within their families to protect trade secrets and mitigate outside competition.

Tulsi, Saroj, and Preeti Kala are redefining the role of women in the Jaipur goldsmiths' community. Diligent, determined, and soft-spoken, the three women are proud of their accomplishments. With their subtle smiles, they revealed how fully aware they are of their role in setting a new precedent in the Jaipur goldsmithing community.

Laura Marsolek is a metalsmith and jewelry historian who spent a year in Rajasthan as a Luce Scholar, a prestigious fellowship program of the Henry Luce Foundation. She worked as a jewelry and decorative arts specialist in the curatorial department at Mehrangarh Museum Trust in Jodhpur, while learning traditional Indian goldsmithing techniques in Soni workshops and collaborating with local jewelers. Laura currently resides in Southern California, where she studies gemology at the Gemological Institute of America.

HIDDEN GEMS

BY KATE HENSLER FOGARTY



Above and below right:

Details from *Daniel Brush: Jewels Sculpture*

I'VE NEVER BEEN to Daniel Brush's hallowed studio, the loft on West 24th Street in New York City where he has lived and worked with his wife Olivia since 1978, but it sounds like quite a place. The 5,000-square-foot space, one understands, features numerous collections of objects, from the exquisite to the everyday; an eighteenth-century lathe and other machinery; an extensive library; and a very clean floor (Brush famously spends three hours every morning meditatively sweeping the wooden expanse).

This "multi-disciplinary artist, sculptor, poet, philosopher, scholar, engineer, and enigma," as Vivienne Becker describes him in the introduction to *Daniel Brush: Jewels Sculpture*, is far from one of the art world's best-known names, but among the names that matter, he is the stuff of legend. Daniel Brush's jewelry is a universe unto itself. To be immersed in this new book, which spans his nearly fifty-year career, is to be disoriented and surprised, challenged and delighted; so unfamiliar and unusual is his work, free of timeline, or modern cultural references, or trends. Or price tags. Brush approaches steel and aluminum with the same reverence as he does gold or precious stones, so it's impossible to guess what a Daniel Brush object sells for; but one is quite sure that the price is close to that of a Tesla, or at least the front seat.

And where to purchase a Daniel Brush jewel, if one so desires? Not so fast. He has never had a dealer. These treasures are often not seen by anyone, or not for years. A few works may be sold, "sporadically, occasionally, when the right 'guardian' for them comes along and the right occasion presents itself," writes Becker. Daniel and Olivia choose these "stewards" carefully, most often from a small circle of friends, collectors, and patrons. The jewels pass, as they describe it, from warm hands to warm hands.

So how, exactly, does keeping all of your work hidden in your studio pay the bills? A 2013 *Vanity Fair* article alluded to the generous and unwavering support of a few well-heeled patrons, de' Medicis of our time. And how fitting, as Brush's technique and process is much closer to that of the finest artists and craftsmen of the Renaissance and antiquity than those of today's jewelry world.

For example, Brush spent 1,000 hours engraving undulating waves onto a blackened steel box. He labored for days on the moiré surface of one stainless-steel choker. He spent a decade studying various genres of poetry, history, and philosophy, recording his impressions in manic and meticulous ink drawings, which then informed a series of engraved steel jewel-objects. He apprenticed for a professional car mechanic for many years, restoring vintage racing cars. Fittingly, this gorgeous slipcased tome is filled with not only lush photographs of finished works, but pages of the obsessive notes, scrawlings, original poetry, research, and Polaroids that inform each series. Whatever insane amount Daniel Brush is asking for a brooch, it's probably not enough.

Daniel Brush: Jewels Sculpture
By Vivienne Becker, with a foreword by Nicolas Bos
Photography by Takaaki Matsumoto
Rizzoli Electa, 2019
Hardcover, 256 pp, 180 color illustrations, $65

Indeed, while the reverent tales of this little-known artist's monastic life and rarely seen work might incite an eye roll, first spend an afternoon with *Daniel Brush: Jewels Sculpture*. It's a lovely experience, to which you will find yourself drawn again and again. Like a favorite room in the Met Museum, or a telescope with a view of the stars, it's impossible to take in all of its delights in one sitting. As Lee Siegelson, vintage jewelry specialist and friend of the Brushes, remarked to *Vanity Fair:* "His stuff is what you show your kids when you want them to see what a human being is capable of making."

The talismanic power attributed to jewels since the dawn of humanity endures in the hands of Daniel Brush. His *Tondos* series of hand-engraved steel brooches calls upon the mystery and power of the circle: the solar disc of ancient Egypt, the mandala of India, the Buddhist wheel of life, and the tondos of Renaissance Italy. These pieces are designed to be held in the hand, and are embellished with charms of rose quartz and turquoise, inlaid with gems, or bedangled with diamond beads. "I love the idea that you could fall asleep smiling as you hold a jewel or sculpture," Brush explains.

Brush works with humility but without limits. To inform themselves on lapidary skills and techniques, several years ago Daniel and Olivia traveled to Idar-Oberstein (the stone-cutting center in Germany), Native American reservations in the Southwest, Hong Kong, and a master signet ring maker in New York City. He bought lapidary machines from all over the world—then rebuilt them all. These experiments led to *Couvert de Voyage*, a unique collection of colorful, organically hewn stone-in-stone bracelets, comprised of precious gems like rubies and diamonds but also Arizona banded agate, polished onyx, and jade. To a collector visiting the studio, who dared to admire a few bracelets from each of the four traveling cases into which the series was nestled, Brush offered a rebuff: this was not a "trunk show of jewelry from which to pick and choose." Select an entire case of twenty-four bracelets—or leave empty-wristed.

I defy the reader to create a flow chart from one collection to the next: each appears entirely unique. For his first piece of jewelry, Olivia's wedding ring in 1973, Brush spent months teaching himself the ancient Etruscan art of gold granulation. A later series of seventy-two engraved steel cuff bangles displays a variety of graphic and lyrical themes and—gasp—a sense of humor. His *Menagerie Magnetique* collection evolved from his son's love of animal crackers. Its best-known work, the *Bunny Bangle*, a cuff carved of pale-pink Bakelite-style plastic topped with a rabbit, drew from his desire to make a "big-girl" version of the plastic dresser sets he remembers from his parents' children's store in Cleveland. While working on the piece, in an unusual event that seems practically routine in the life of Daniel Brush, a friend handed him a parcel of 1,000 carats of newly discovered pink diamonds. Brush smothered the rabbit in them, and added more to the other works in the series. "I wanted them to look like five-and-dime Woolworth toys," he says. "It was only afterward that I realized the money that was involved."

Brush's series of palm-sized "jewel-sculptures" titled *Thinking About Monet* is transfixing. Though he had always been taken with the French impressionists' use of color, he didn't love the paintings themselves. He even moved to France, only to be convinced that the works indeed paled in comparison to the natural light bathing those famous haystacks. His enduring preoccupation with the nature and science of light, and how to marry it with color, led him to the scientific principle of diffraction grating, which can break a beam of light into many wavelengths that manifest as different colors. Thus he hand-engraved a series of steel pieces that are not painted, dyed, or colored in any way, but release a remarkable rainbow of hues. Their edges ragged, perhaps a tip to Monet's haystacks, these works ripple with red, pink, blue, and gold. They dazzle.

Not surprisingly, the book is a work of art in itself, featuring photographs of more than 150 jewels and sculpture, some on view for the first time. "I have been busy for more than fifty years, not knowing what I am doing, preferring endless paths and confusions to linearity…Until about three years ago, I never thought about the years, but the loft became stacked with unseen work," Brush reflects. From his warm hands to ours, *Daniel Brush: Jewels Sculpture* is a marvelous gift.

Kate Hensler Fogarty is contributing editor to Metalsmith.

DEVICES & DESIRES

a conversation

By Andrea DiNoto

Ira Sherman self-defines as follows:

designer/inventor of mechanical sculpture; creator of sculptural and functional jewelry in gold and precious stones; and designer of both architectural metalwork and Judaic ritual art.

The master metalsmith is also a well-respected teacher and lecturer whose entertaining and informative YouTube videos have drawn thousands of views.[1]

For Sherman, the "lyrical line"[2] of his jewelry informs what has become the main focus of his art: kinetic steel body sculpture that addresses societal issues ranging from bad-faith negotiating to the prevalence of rape culture. The chastity belt, his art form of choice, dares to take on sexual assault with provocative, at times confounding, and, yes, objectifying beauty. Sherman's work provokes wonder—and questions. Here, he answers a few of mine.

Opposite:
The Orchid, 2016
Mild steel, brass, garnet, amethyst
5½ x 3 x 3 ft.
Photo: Anthony Weatherly

Molinete (rear detail), 2016
Mild steel, brass,
garnet, amethyst
7 x 4 x 4 ft.
Photo: Becca Henry

Q You have been Denver-based since 1972, but started out in Chicago. How did your childhood inform your life choice as a metalsmith, one with a social conscience?

A I grew up in Skokie, Illinois, the son of a Jewish father whose leg had been blown off by a land mine in World War II. He wore a prosthetic leg, and I was fascinated with it and studied how it worked. As a child, I took all my toys apart the instant I received them. Still do, by the way.[3] Also, my father worked in a used metal machinery fabrication business. I spent hours examining and playing with the equipment. At the same time, I grew up in a community of Holocaust survivors, some very bitter, others observant Jews who cherished the gift of life. As a boy, I sided with the bitter individuals and severed my connection with Judaism.

Q How did you come to art and metalsmithing?

A I started out in science, but in the 1970s I discovered metalsmithing as an expressive media. Postwar abstract art in the '60s gave me permission to let my mind explore in any direction. I mastered every aspect of jewelry design and fabrication, and in 1986, the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery acquired one of my pieces, a 14k gold wristlet, for their permanent collection.[4]

Q Among your earliest pieces of mechanized sculpture are gas-chamber pendants, a chilling concept that conjures the Holocaust. True?

A I was a sickly child often taken to doctors, and I began to associate medical instruments with those used by the Nazis to experiment on and torture Jews. In the '70s I made a *Portable Gas Chamber* pendant. It was made of stainless steel, glass, moonstones, plastic tubing, sterling silver, and resin. Yes, it was Holocaust-inspired, but referred both to revenge and sacrifice. The idea then was to take jewelry as far as you could. It was my first attempt at plausible reality, or the "holy shit" factor.[5]

Armored Headdress F1, 2019
Brass, steel, stainless steel, plastic tubing, amethyst, garnet, synthetic emerald, bronze, mild steel netting
6 x 4 x 3 ft.
Photo: Nino Silva

Models on the runway at the 2016 *Chastity Couture/ Green is the New Black Fashion Extravaganza*, Carbondale, CO.

Photo: Renee Ramge

Q In the '70s, second-wave feminists were producing highly controversial, personalized, often raw performance art that raged against the pervasiveness of rape and sexual assault.[6] You came of age as an artist in that same era, when women began to speak out against rape. How did you come to choose the legendary[7] chastity belt as a rape prevention device?

A In the '60s, a woman I was dating told me she had been sexually abused by her father from age seven to fifteen. I was shocked, as I had never thought much about incest. Years later, other women, some of them friends, also told me about their rape experiences, and as a lark I made a chastity belt just to see what I could do with the concept as a piece of jewelry. One of the women suggested I base a collection on chastity belts. She thought it would not be objectionable to women. I interviewed her and others about what they wanted to see happen to the attacker. All asked for revenge, but most asked that the rapist be apprehended, identified, and punished.

Q In 2006 you had a one-man exhibition of your *Impenetrable Devices* collection at the Metal Museum in Memphis. What did it include?

A They were all stainless steel pieces that did something aggressive or defensive, based on what I'd learned from interviews with the women. In one, *The Injector*, pressure would activate two needles that would simultaneously inject the rapist's genitals with a sedative and an identifying tattoo. A conservative local paper objected to an exhibition of "genital armor and castration mechanisms" being paid for by taxpayer dollars. The museum had to clarify public financing went only toward staff salaries, not exhibitions.[8] The story was picked by the AP and went global.[9]

Q *Voices of Art Magazine* wrote in a review of this show that "the mechanical beauty of these pieces is breathtaking… unquestionably sculpture of a sophisticated and visual nature."[10] But I wonder, where sexual assault is concerned, does beauty only serve to objectify women? Invariably, work by women artists depicts the horror of sexual assault in graphic terms.[11] Male artists traditionally aestheticized rape scenes to demonstrate their skills, but also to invite the so-called "male gaze."[12]

A In my view, beauty is redemptive when dealing with a horrific subject. Humor also addresses disturbing issues very effectively.

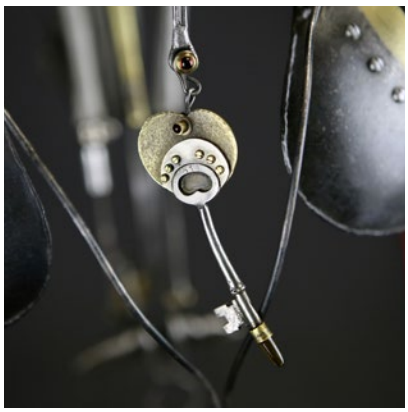
Q What is involved in creating these highly engineered sculptures?

A It takes about six months to complete one work, from planning stage through the demanding forged-steel fabrication process, in which working mechanical elements, such as pneumatic, kinetic, and control systems are incorporated into the final form. I build the exoskeletal sculptures on anatomically correct mannequins so that I can fit them on live models for runway shows.

Q We'll come to the runway shows, but these are artworks, clearly not meant for everyday wear. You show them on bodies, but also as disembodied devices, so to speak. Are you making wearable art or something else entirely?

A I'm making "plausible reality," artworks that seem possible, with the intention of bringing awareness to situations, such as rape and social misbehavior, as with my *Panaceas for Persistent Problems* collection.[13] Plausibility is the hook.[14] Mostly people are fascinated with the work. A few are not. A woman once said to me, "How dare you capitalize on rape for a joke!"

Funnel Corset (on model), 2015
Mild steel, brass, garnet, amethyst, stainless steel, pneumatic components
6 x 4 x 3 ft.
Photo: Ira Sherman



Armored Headdress F1 (detail), 2019
Brass, steel, stainless steel, plastic tubing, amethyst, garnet, synthetic emerald, bronze, mild steel netting
6 x 4 x 3 ft.
Photo: Ira Sherman

Q Two of your pieces are made for men, "cathartic" devices designed to deter or short-circuit the urge to rape. *The Funnel Corset* (2015) is a masturbating device; the other, *Flamethrower* (2014), is an erect steel penis that seems to me more of a nightmarish weapon than a deterrent. But you say some women have positive reactions to it.

A A woman I know who told me she'd been sexually assaulted and stalked as a teenager saw the *Flamethrower* in my studio. She viewed it as a unisex object that would put the wearer in a position of power.

Q Can we just emphasize the *Flamethrower* doesn't really work; mechanically, that is?

A An early test proved it to be absurdly dangerous, but I'd never test it on myself or anyone else. Oh, and it was once worn by a woman in a cabaret show.

Q Last year, Denver's BitFactory gallery[15] presented your updated and punningly titled collection *Hard-Core Chastity Couture*. The objects were shown freestanding, each accompanied by a small photo showing it worn on the runway. Bejeweled steel G-strings are equipped with locks and keys. A steel "Little Black Skirt" simulates a leather mini. An elaborate suit of armor sports a motorized steel-mesh headdress and steel bra cups. In the show's wall caption, Suzanne Ramljak[16] noted that the pieces send "mixed signals…both courting and thwarting physical contact," but on the other hand allow wearers to be "sexy and safe, inviting and invincible."

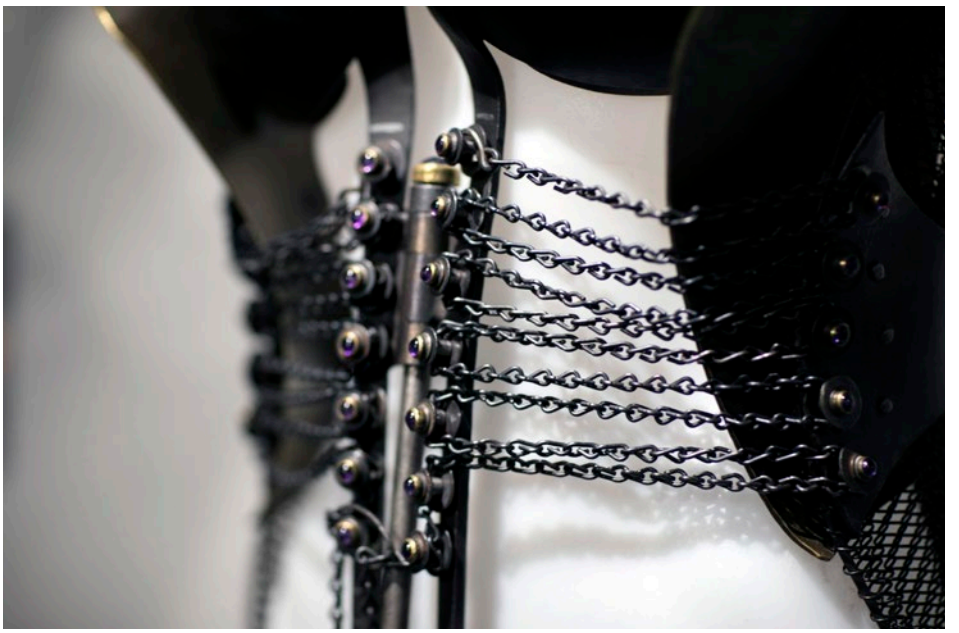
A Yes, "sexy and safe" is the message I hope to convey: the female double standard, which is truly pervasive.

Q You once called the collection "dystopian lingerie," a wonderfully apt phrase for your runway shows. What gave you the idea for what I would describe as erotically tasteful semi-nude spectacles?

A Pam Hogg, the Scottish punk fashion designer and rock star, put nude models on the catwalk. The nudity was not gratuitous. It enhanced and directly related to her work.[17] My models—either volunteers or professionals—are never totally nude. The runway shows have always been effective fundraisers for arts organizations.

Q Still, you prefer the works to be displayed and appreciated as objects, not worn.

A Yes!



Chastity Chain Corset
(front detail), 2016
Brass, steel, bronze, amethyst
12 x 10 x 10 in.
Photo: Nino Silva

Q *The Orchid*, made in 2016, is a strikingly beautiful chastity belt with a voluptuous steel orchid as centerpiece. It won the Innovation Award from the 2018 Lewton-Brain Foldform competition. What is foldforming?

A Charles Lewton-Brain invented the technique, by which metal is literally folded and forged into curvilinear forms by means of vise, anvils, and dies. I use it in both jewelrymaking and blacksmithing to shape steel to the human body, and for both public sculpture and ritual art.

Q These include the *Stang Machine*, an interactive steel-and-neon public sculpture for Denver's light rail, and numerous pieces of silver Judaica.[18] At what point did you lose your childhood aversion to religiosity?

A I traveled to Israel for the first time in my thirties. I was stunned! Everything there was Jewish! I felt a part of it. When I got a commission to make twenty-foot-tall menorah gates for a Denver synagogue, I found the rabbi to be warm and wonderful, not like the people I grew up with. I learned about Jewish ritual objects, which are all made using jewelry techniques. I learned to be Jewish.

Q What question are you most often asked?

A People ask me, "What's it like to be an artist?" My answer is *The Explosion Injection-Forming Harness*, a pneumatic steel corset that locks onto the torso the way an idea grips you. The pressure intensifies until pistons powered by high-pressure air ignite a blasting cap that literally blows a piece of jewelry, a bagel-shaped metal die, out of your chest: that brilliant idea artists live for.

Q Have you ever worn it?

A Yes, I have. Have I ever fired it on myself? No! Are you crazy? The thing explodes!

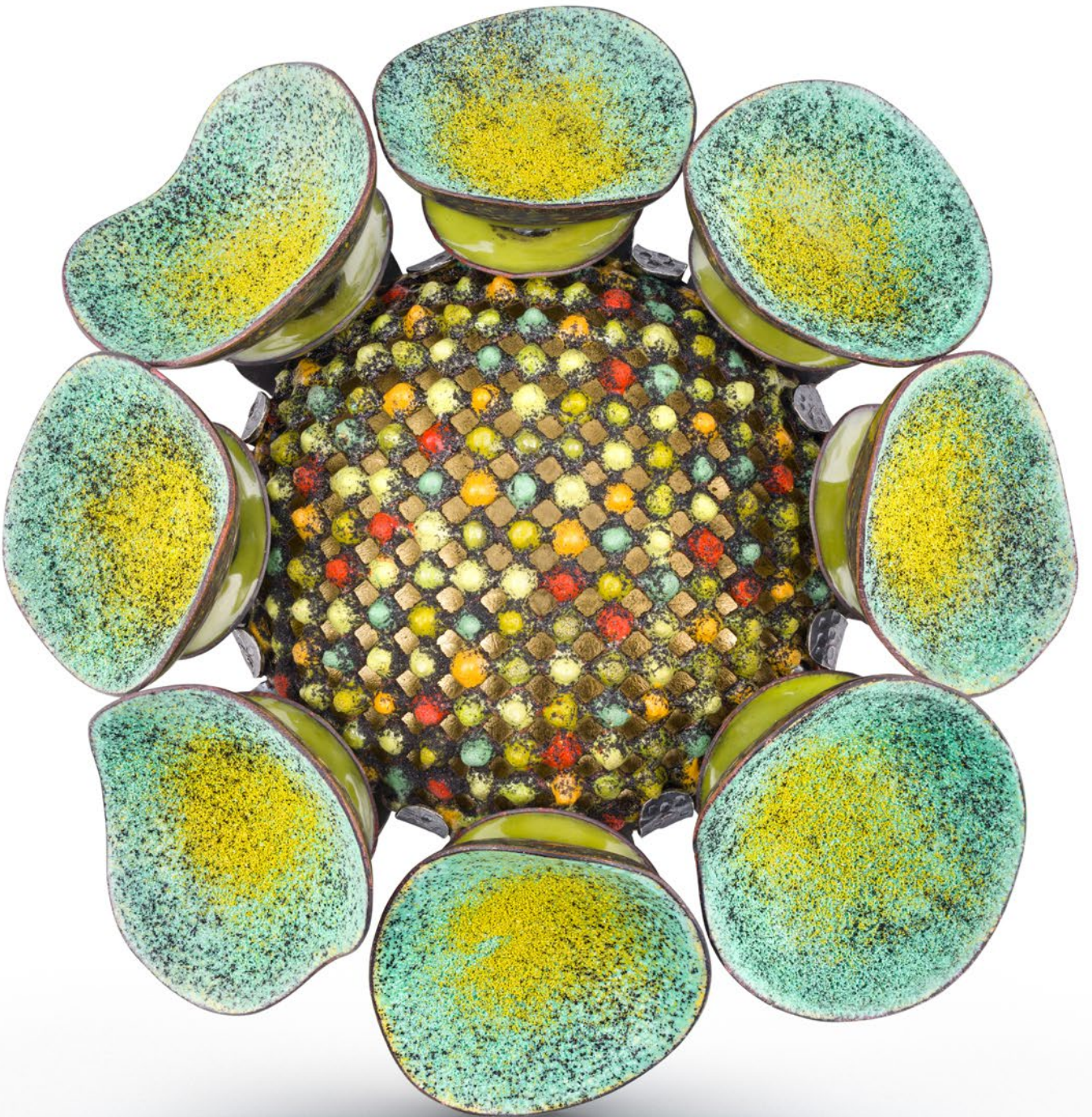
Andrea DiNoto writes about art, craft, and design.

1 irasherman.com and "Ira Sherman YouTube" provide multiple videos demonstrating various aspects of his work. / **2** http://academyartunews.com/newspaper/2016/02/8.html. Academy Art U News, 2016,02, "Lyrical Line and the Art of Mechanization." / **3** Sherman adapts the electronics from the Furby, a robotic toy introduced in 1998, to produce kinetic sculptures, such as *Furby's Kinetic Workout*, an exercise bike that takes the rider for a wild ride as shown in a YouTube demonstration: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jqwL9zbwGE / **4** https://americanart.si.edu/artist/ira-sherman-27948. / **5** The pendant was exhibited at the International Contemporary Crafts of the Americas show in 1975, giving Sherman the encouragement and confidence to dive into the world of wearable mechanical art. / **6** Two books published in 2019 document the era: *Unspeakable Acts: Women, Art, and Sexual Violence in the 1970s* by Nancy Princenthal, Illustrated. Thames & Hudson. *Against Our Will: Sexual Trauma in American Art Since 1970* by Vivian Green Fryd. Pennsylvania State University Press. Green Fryd borrows her title from Susan Brownmiller's ground-breaking work *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* (1975). / **7** *The Medieval Chastity Belt: A Myth-Making Process* by Albercht Classen. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Classen, a medievalist at U. Arizona, Tuscon, presents scholarly evidence debunking belief in the chastity belt as a device that was ever actually worn by women, calling it "a fantasy object since the 15th century." / **8** https://www.today.com/popculture/anti-rape-devices-stir-debate-metal-museum-wbna10946622. / **9** In 2017 the Huffington Post ran a feature on Sherman's work: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/artists-metal-chastity-designs-shine-fashion-show_b_58a57578e4b0fa149f9ac1ee. / **10** *Voices of Art Magazine*, Vol. 14, no.1,2006. "Impenetrable Devices: Works by Ira Sherman" by Dr. Nancy Moyers. / **11** https://www.artforum.com/print/201801/fully-loaded-power-and-sexual-violence-73188. Warning: this article contains a graphic photo of a staged rape scene by the artist Ana Mendieta. / **12** https://metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437329. Nicholas Poussin. *The Abduction of the Sabine Women*. / **13** Sherman's "Pavlovian Trainer" is humorously described on his website: http://www.irasherman.com/Pavlovian.html. / **14** An example of a real anti-rape device is the Rape-aXe female condom: https://www.cbsnews.com/news/anti-rape-condoms-picture-will-jagged-teeth-deter-world-cup-sex-assaults-rape-axe-hopes-so. / **15** *Ira Sherman: Hardcore Chastity Couture: Beauty Meets the Beast in Provocative Anti-rape Fashions*. Curated by Ira Sherman and Bill Thomason.July 19-August 8, 2019. BitFactory Gallery , Denver, Colorado. / **16** Formerly Editor of *Metalsmith* magazine, Ramljak is the author of *On Body and Soul, Contemporary Armor to Amulets*, which includes Sherman's work, among others, and which were also displayed in her curated exhibition *Uneasy Beauty: Discomfort in Contemporary Adornment* at the Fuller Craft Museum in 2018. / **17** http://untitled-magazine.com/pam-hogg-london-ss-2011-fashion-show. / **18** Among Sherman's ritual objects: *Ner Tamid*, the eternal light that hangs above the ark. Illumination results when a laser beam is aimed at a small diamond suspended in a glass sphere; *Hoshen*, a massive, silver priestly necklace is inlaid with twelve colored stones.

COMING OF AGE

Next-Career Artists

By Mary Raivel
and Mary Fissell



"I choose to believe that my age is not a hindrance to how far I can go from here, but that my life experience up until now only makes my work stronger and more meaningful," says jeweler Charity Poole. More than twenty years ago, she was the first person in her entire extended family to go to college, and was urged to major in something "practical." But decades later, Poole went back to school to pursue a BFA in metalsmithing and jewelry design. Her experience of coming to jewelry later in life is not uncommon; we are two artists whose careers have followed similar trajectories.

Previous Spread:

Jamie Kroeger
Linked I and *Linked II*, 2019
Copper, steel, enamel and acrylic paint
Linked I: 10 x 6 x 3 cm
Linked II: 10.5 x 7 x 3 cm
Photo by the artist

Wendy McAllister
Anemone, 2015
Vitreous enamel, sterling silver, copper, 24k gold, 3¾ x 3¾ x 1 in.
Photo: Victor Wolansky

Susanne Henry
Paperchain Necklace, 2015
Steel
36 x 2½ x 2½ in.
Photo: Jocelyn Negron

Marian Ripoll Vaquer
Last Dance, Last Chance, 2019
Oxidized sterling silver, stainless steel, recycled plastic
11 x 5 x 17 cm
Photo: Emma Todd

We are both in the early stages of our art jewelry careers—Mary Raivel is an emerging contemporary art jeweler who until recently focused on making production work for juried craft shows, but is now focused on one-of-a-kind and conceptual pieces. She was an environmental attorney for over two decades before becoming a jeweler and metalsmith. Mary Fissell is a historian by training who makes conceptual works. Both of us pursued careers in other fields for decades before beginning our study of art jewelry and metalsmithing.

About a year ago, we began researching exhibition, residency, and grant opportunities for emerging artists. We found that a number of these opportunities imposed age limits on applicants. They seemed to assume that emerging artists are, by definition, young.

So we decided to create an opportunity. We proposed and put out a call for *Coming of Age* (CoA), a pop-up exhibition of work by what we term "next-career artists" (NCAs), at Adorned Spaces at the 2019 SNAG conference. For this exhibition, we defined NCAs as artists who began studying art jewelry after age forty, or who had spent at least fifteen years working in another field.

The response to our call was heartening: sixty-five artists from twenty states in the US, as well as from eight other countries, applied to *Coming of Age*, submitting more than three hundred pieces for consideration. They came from a variety of prior careers, from mechanical engineer to back-country ski guide; from public sector planner to biologist; from warehouse staff to marketing; from State Department employee to homemaker and caregiver. A number of artists shared concerns in their applications, subsequent emails, and on social media about being excluded from emerging artist opportunities based on age. At sixty-one, Susanne Henry was frustrated to encounter such restrictions "at the same time that [she was] so passionate and committed to this new work." She finds it "maddening to think that in the art world, of all places, the work cannot speak for itself."

A number of institutions offer much-needed support for the development of artists in the early stages of their careers. Some have no age restrictions; others restrict applications for their programs with age limits. By essentially equating "early career," "emerging," or "next generation" with "young," such opportunities inadvertently send the message to next-career artists that their work is not worthy of consideration. These opportunities sometimes point to the financial challenges and struggles to build a new career as an artist that young people face. But emerging artists of all ages encounter such challenges.

These opportunities sometimes point to the financial challenges and struggles to build a new career as an artist that young people face. But emerging artists of all ages encounter such challenges.

These issues of definition have been much discussed by institutions seeking to support early-career artists. For example, Yvonne Montoya, the Director of Art Jewelry Forum (AJF), describes "much debate over the word 'emerging' because it is not age-related."[1] What was called the "AJF Emerging Artist Award" was recently renamed the "AJF Young Artist Award" (for artists under thirty-five), because,

as Montoya explains, it had always been designed specifically to help young artists. She notes that AJF sees itself as advocating for art jewelers of all ages, and were funding to be available, it might explore an award for emerging NCAs.

The $50,000 Burke Prize, offered by the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD), gives "visibility to young artists who represent the next generation" to "carry craft into the future."[2] MAD sought "fresh faces" and "fresh vision" in developing the Burke Prize, according to Angelik Vizcarrondo-Laboy, Assistant Curator.[3] MAD recognized that it may take artists a long time to complete their education, and longer still to achieve the financial stability to "fully dedicate themselves to the studio."[4] They also wanted eligibility criteria, including an age limit; after much discussion they set it at forty-five.[5] MAD notes, "We recognize that there are many talented artists over the age of forty-five, but most (although not all) have had the benefit of time to create a stronger professional network and economic foundation for their practice."[6] Vizcarrondo-Laboy adds, "Getting rid of the age limit altogether [would] open the application to very established members of the field (who have had many opportunities) . . . . our focus is not on 'emergence' but on a generation of young artists[;] age then tailors the applications. . . ."[7] But using age as a criterion (rather than, for example, number of years as a full-time professional artist) reinforces the stereotype that only artists who commit to making art in their youth are worth considering—that only they can be the "fresh faces" and "fresh vision."

Artists who emerge later in life have come to jewelry and metals in a variety of ways, and draw on a range of connections between their decades of lived experience and the work they produce.

A number of institutions do not define "emerging" in relation to age. SNAG's Educational Endowment Scholarships for Emerging Artists do not have an age limit. As Anne Havel explains, "We do not classify 'emerging' based on age, but rather, starting in the field." Artists self-define as "emerging" in their applications. Juried craft shows such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art Craft Show, the American Craft Council (ACC), and the American Craft Exposition have emerging artist categories or programs that are not based on age, but rather number of years as a professional artist.

When no age restrictions are imposed, emerging NCAs earn recognition by noted art jewelry institutions. For example, Eva Fernandez's work was selected by Galerie Marzee (Netherlands) for its International Graduate Show and Marzee for Starters, both for emerging artists. A mechanical engineer for sixteen years, Fernandez received her MFA from Edinburgh College of Art in 2016. Juan Fried began teaching himself art jewelry and metalsmithing after more than thirty years as an architect and urban designer. His work was selected for SNAG's Jewelry and Metals Survey (JaMS)—which is juried by a different panel of professionals each year—in 2017, 2018, and 2019; for the American Craft Council's Hip Pop program;[8] and for a number of exhibitions, including *Materials Hard and Soft*[9] in 2017.

Artists who emerge later in life have come to jewelry and metals in a variety of ways, and draw on a range of connections between their decades of lived experience and the work they produce. Jamie Kroeger worked for fifteen years as a back-country ski guide and snow safety technician. That experience informs her metalsmithing and jewelry work. "The shapes and forms are inspired by the everyday tasks performed by avalanche technicians and snow science professionals… Allowing material and process to reveal the narrative, I rely on the repetitive task of sewing beads to forms to emulate meticulously isolating and identifying individual snow crystals," she says.

Juan Fried first worked in metal after he moved back to a Minnesota farmstead to care for his widowed mother. He explains, "As a way to deal with cultural isolation and grief, I hammered and fused metal detritus found in our outbuildings with my grandfather-in-law's pitted tools." Compared to his previous work in architecture, Fried finds, "As a metalsmith I can do things now that were not possible with large-scale work—architectural or

Jamie Kroeger
Shovel, 2018
Steel, paint, glass beads, felt, cotton thread
13 cm x 8 cm x 4 cm
Photo by the artist

sculptural. The more intimate, personal nature of my current work feels more appropriate and necessary in this stage of my life, moving away from perfectionism toward something more organic, more impulsive. I strive to make my work reflect the diversity of my ancestry, my urban experiences, and my new home in the countryside."

After her father died, Bridget Parlato wanted to use small items from his desk to make reliquaries for hair from his last haircut. Wanting to make them in metal, but not having any experience, she applied for a scholarship to the Baltimore Jewelry Center (BJC) "on a whim." She received it, and began taking classes at the BJC, a community-based metals and art jewelry educational organization. She then began incorporating single-use plastic bags from her environmental activist work into fabricated metal jewelry. "I have brought the material back into a context where it helps to, again, carry a message," she says. "Noting the plastic's reaction to heat, I became really enamored with the textures created as the bags melted. The "scorched earth" look of fused plastic bags being cut for

Eva Fernandez
Soft Links, 2016
Flexible resin
23 x 23 x 5 cm
Photo by the artist

You've lost.
For many, death, even the thought of it, is far off.
And then, one day, it's not.
In our minds and in our lives, we prefer to package death up, push it away, and not even speak of it. Whether long in coming, or startlingly sudden, death eventually takes a seat next to us and it is huge and terrible or like a long, low, endless ache.
Or maybe both. And yet, the world keeps moving on...
Once upon a time, we donned gowns and suits of black. We wore dark adornments in remembrance of those we'd loved and lost. Bands of black encircled our arms... and hearts.
Or maybe, in part, we wore those things to say to the world, "be careful with me. I hurt."
Wear this.
Whenever you want.
For as long as you want.
Let it spark conversations about death, about loss, about remembrance and love.
Let it help turn shushed whispers into connecting conversations.
Wear it until you don't want to wear it anymore.
Or maybe until you want to wear things in brighter hues.

Bridget Parlato
Mourning Pin, 2019
Copper, plastic bag
2 x 2 x ½ in.
Photo by the artist

Moreover, in our personal experience, it is as unsettling as it is liberating to find yourself a novice again when you've spent decades achieving competence in another field.

earrings prompted a piece about mourning following the death of my parents."

The pathways by which NCAs study metalsmithing are varied. Some have taken the BFA/MFA route typical of younger artists. Victoria Bulgakova, for example, earned an MFA from Cranbrook Academy, and Satomi Kawai from the University of Iowa. Angela Caldwell is currently enrolled in an MFA program at Indiana University, Bloomington. For Katja Toporski, pursuing an MFA afforded her what she calls a "critical challenge" that forced her to dig deep, investigate motivations, and build conceptual integrity. However, older emerging artists often cannot pursue degrees, because they cannot relocate due to family responsibilities, or take on a substantial additional debt on top of existing financial burdens, such as student loans, medical bills, financial support of family members (including their education), and mortgage payments.

So NCAs often pursue alternative educational paths. After Parlato won the scholarship for her first metalsmithing class, she subsequently participated in BJC's work-study program; she likes the way she can fit in classes with her work schedule as a graphic designer and environmental activist. She subsequently won a work-study scholarship to Penland. For NCAs, craft schools such as Penland, Haystack, and Arrowmont provide immersive technical instruction and artistic development in intense one-or two-week long workshops in a retreat-based model—away from their daily routines, and exposed to students and instructors from all over the world.

For emerging NCAs, community-based programs such as the BJC, Lillstreet (Chicago), Metalwerx (Boston), and Brooklyn Metalworks, among others, are "crucial sites for that first encounter/exposure to metals and art jewelry," and their continuing development, according to Shane Prada, Director of the BJC. High quality instruction, artists' talks, symposia, and gallery exhibits offer students a variety of approaches to art jewelry. Pam Robinson at Lillstreet describes how such organizations offer not only instruction but crucial resources: workspace, tools, and equipment. Both emphasized the dynamic role such institutions can play. Robinson said "It's exciting when people find a new path that they fall in love with—and I love that we can help them do that and not be afraid." Fostering such alternative

Angela Caldwell
My Weight, 2019
Cotton twine, antique handkerchief, steel, weights
36 x 1 x 1 in.
Photo: Angela Caldwell/Jill Meyerhoff

Juan Fried
Yucatan Brooch Cenote, 2019
Brass, steel, asphalt pavement fragment
8 x 8 x 3 cm
Photo: Juan Fried

Victoria Bulgakova
Things I Haven't Said, 2019
Brass
20½ x 24 x 2 cm
Photo by the artist

educational pathways—in addition to traditional BFA/MFA programs—could expand the field and make it more inclusive by significantly reducing financial and other obstacles to would-be NCAs, and a range of other artists.

Both Prada and Robinson suggest that NCAs have different vulnerabilities than younger artists. Robinson thinks that older emerging artists can be at a disadvantage with galleries who equate new ideas with younger artists. Moreover, in her experience younger emerging artists are less afraid of what people will think, and thus less easily discouraged by rejection, whereas NCAs tend to be more sensitive to negative feedback. Community organizations, therefore, can see their role as building confidence for NCAs, as well as offering instruction and development. As Robinson says, "I have my pom-poms out!"

NCAs appreciate cheerleaders such as Pam Robinson when they get discouraged by age restrictions. When encountered repeatedly, such restrictions can send a message that we don't belong here; that, as a group, NCAs' work is less worthy than that of younger emerging artists. Moreover, in our personal experience, it is as unsettling as it is liberating to find yourself a novice again when you've spent decades achieving competence in another field.

But, as the quality of the work submitted for *Coming of Age* demonstrated, emerging NCAs are as capable of fresh, new ideas as younger emerging artists. CoA also revealed how many artists in our field have come to jewelry as a next career, and how varied their paths have been. As a result, we hope the community will become more inclusive of NCAs, especially in emerging artist opportunities. Increased awareness of NCAs would, we hope, lead to increased recognition for the non-traditional educational and career paths that NCAs follow, and perhaps open doors for a broader range of artists overall. In doing so, the community could recognize a greater range of experiences, increasing the vibrancy and size of our field. In the meantime, as Bridget Parlato put it, "I intend to grow old with metalsmithing. Or perhaps, older…"

Mary Raivel became a full-time art jeweler at fifty, after a career as an environmental attorney. She began studying metal-smithing at forty-five.

Mary Fissell is a historian and metalsmith in Baltimore; she began work in metal in her mid-fifties.

1 Authors' interview with Montoya, December 12, 2019. / **2** See Burke Prize FAQs, https://madmuseum.org/content/burke-prize consulted January 26, 2020 ("Burke Prize FAQs"). / **3** Author interview with Angelik Vizcarrondo-Laboy, January 24, 2020 ("AVL interview"). / **4** See Burke Prize FAQs. / **5** AVL interview. / **6** See Burke Prize FAQs. / **7** Email from Angelik Vizcarrondo-Laboy to author, January 24, 2020. / **8** A program for emerging artists in the American Craft Council shows. / **9** Annual materials-based exhibition by the Greater Denton Arts Council in Denton, TX; see https://dentonarts.com/materialshardandsoft.

Truth and Rumors

Nancy Moyer's Theater of the Border

By Donna Mason Sweigart

NANCY MOYER uses contemporary photographs and altered iconography to create provocative jewelry. Her recent collection, *Truth and Rumors*, is arguably the most important work of her career. Moyer has been a maker and educator for decades, but her studio practice has evolved from self-referential and autobiographical to work inspired by recent events in her region on the Texas-Mexico border, and the increased attention by national news outlets to the area.

The idea of the border as "theater" spurred Moyer to a considerable frenzy of creation. Moyer's 2018 exhibition at the International Museum of Art and Science in McAllen, Texas, entitled *Truth and Rumors* encompassed several distinct collections differentiated by their cast of characters. Moyer's dramatized portrayal of the border through her jewelry is intended as commentary on the public's misperceptions of the complex web of border realities. Her opaque artist statements avoid charged politics, as she prefers to let viewers make their own conclusions. Her objects, however, are revealing, problematic, and beautiful, while dramatic in both factual and fantastical expression. To emphasize performance, the artist employs dualistic imagery from both photographic images and exaggerated depictions of life on the border. *Truth and Rumors* explores the space between the artist's perception of the border and national news portrayal. The title of the series symbolizes the polarized drama, while employing the subtle tones of reality. The works could be viewed as subversive or presumptuous, but are undeniably informed.

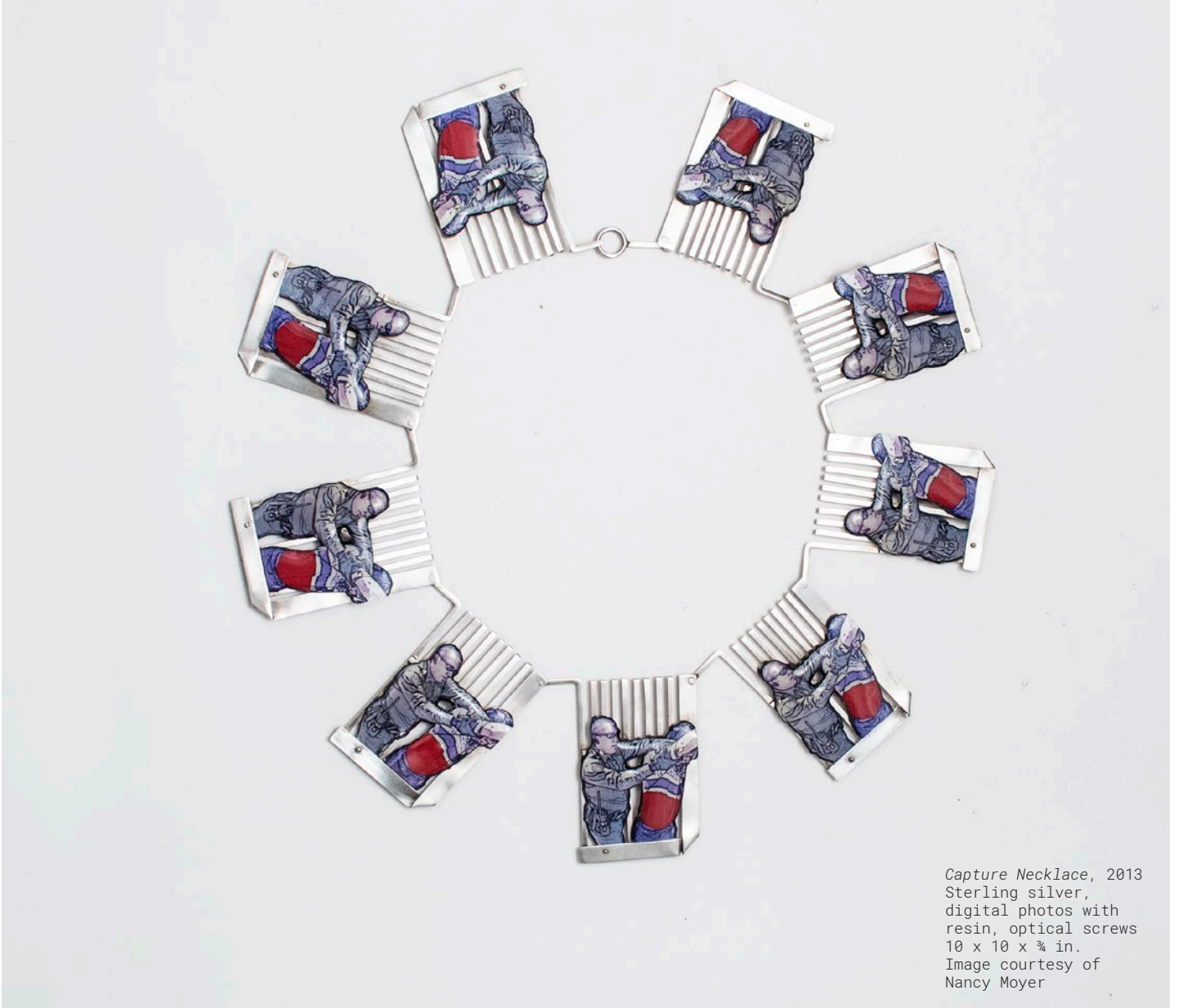
To understand the genesis of *Truth and Rumors*, one must understand Moyer's locale. Moyer, a career artist and retired educator in jewelry at the University of Texas Pan American (now University of Texas Rio Grande Valley), has lived and maintained her studio in McAllen for forty-five years. The Rio Grande Valley consists of four border counties from the Gulf of Mexico west. In South Texas, the greater border area is referred to as *la Frontera,* or the frontier. The land was annexed from Mexico in 1848 as a concession of the Treaty of Hidalgo at the end of the Mexican-American War. It maintains a sense of both the instability of border life, and the stability of an unforgiving landscape of thistly beauty. The region is home to the Native Texas, or Tamaulipan, thorn scrub forest, and is a critical avian migratory path, as well as home to many native and endangered animals. As the edges of small towns, established by trade and boosted into major agriculture by irrigation from the Rio Grande, grow and meet, the land shifts from agriculture to suburban sprawl. However, as the landscape is ravaged by the border fence, farmlands, and houses, the thorn scrub continues to take back any inch that is left fallow by human intervention. The Rio Grande, a natural border, cuts through this landscape. But the natural landscape is not evident in Moyer's work. She chooses only to depict the images and machinations of humans. Her work reveals, through the absence of flora and fauna, the disruption of the Frontera.

The Soul of the Money Launderer, 2018
Sterling silver, 18k, cubic zirconia, digital print with resin, optical screws
3 x 2½ x ¼ in.
Image courtesy of Nancy Moyer

Previous spread:

Ladders and Hopes, 2018
Sterling, 14k plate, onyx crosses, fresh-water pearl crosses, steel chain
13 x 5 x ½ in.
Image courtesy of Nancy Moyer

Travelers, 2018
Sterling, acrylic sheet, digital photographic, decals, rubber cord
12 x 6 x .5 in.
Image courtesy of Nancy Moyer



Capture Necklace, 2013
Sterling silver, digital photos with resin, optical screws
10 x 10 x ¾ in.
Image courtesy of Nancy Moyer

> "Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants."[1]
>
> —Gloria Anzaldúa
> *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

A culture like the one along the Northern Mexico and Southern Texas border that is maintained despite or due to migration and fluidity provides a rich source of artistic themes: humanity and inhumanity, nature and edifice, peace and violence, tolerance and intolerance, beauty and roughness. People in this region have established a distinct culture forged by the confluence of Mexican, Indigenous, Spanish colonial, and European colonial influences.

Moyer has integrated photographic images in her production for decades. The artist sees the transfer of the image as a form of play. The manipulation and reproduction of printed images covered in resin allows for spatial abstraction. Moyer states, "The photographic image relates both to reality and illusion." The photographs she uses are in large part her own. Moyer often uses mirrored and repetitive images in her art, as in *Capture Necklace*, a powerful neckpiece showing an image of an officer arresting a man in each of its nine links. The repetitious images of the faceless detainee allow the figure to symbolize many arrests, while the dedicated officer arrests in succession.

In works such as the neckpiece *The Understanding*, sterling silver and patterned ring stock are used at the base of tableaus. This

The La Lomita Border Wall Protest Rally, 2018
Sterling, gold-leaf, digital photos, resin, thread, surgical steel chain
30 x 11 x ¾ in.
Image courtesy of Nancy Moyer

Immigrant at Customs, 2018
Sterling, digital photo,
resin, rubber cord
2¾ x 2½ x ¼ in.
Image courtesy of Nancy Moyer

Mark Clark
Balaceras con Helicopter, 2011
Oil on linen
40 x 30 in.
Courtesy of Mark Clark

specific pattern and material are visual references to the history of pre- and post-colonized Indigenous, Native American and Mexican metalwork traditions. This ring or bracelet stock material is utilized to veritably ground this scene, acting as the earth under the feet of the Border Patrol officer. This terra firma could be interpreted as expressions of the Texas/Mexico border, or the land and its related cultural fluidity. Or maybe it functions as tire treads on the bleak roads that shadow either side of the border fence.

The works in *Truth and Rumors* include the pendant *Immigrant at Customs* and the necklaces *The La Lomita Border Wall Protest Rally, Capture Necklace, The Travelers*, and *The Gateway*. Each uses photographic imagery that examines the experience of US citizens, immigrants, and visitors lining up for entry into the United States. They portray a contrast between American cultural and medical tourists, calmly lining up for reentry into the US, with persons of Latinx descent being questioned and searched. On the South Texas border, many people legally commute daily across the border for employment and tourism, while, in the same place and time, many are searching for safety as immigrants.

Moyer's insight and personal experiences as a border resident are reflected in the necklace *The La Lomita Border Wall Protest Rally*. The title refers to a historically significant chapel that is currently selected to be on the south side of the border wall, effectively cutting off access for visitors and pilgrims (historical or religious). The chapel continues to be one of the many contentious fights between the federal government[2] and the Catholic Church and local border residents. Moyer defends her home and community by saying, "This area is not a war zone…it is far safer than most American cities."

Moyer also uses resourced and translated imagery of Mesoamerican peoples. She states, "The scale relationships and emphasized heads of these images lend themselves to the medium of jewelry." More importantly, these icons are intended to address the issues of present-day people. She enlists these Mesoamerican figures as characters to represent a scene that would be more complex and gruesome if portrayed realistically. This interpretation is intended to contrast with her photographic imagery of orderly people waiting stoically at international crossings.

Moyer's Mesoamerican representations are themselves re-interpretations of those by her friend, South Texas artist, painter, and gallerist Mark Clark, which she uses with his permission. Clark is well known in the Rio Grande Valley community for his Gallery 409, now closed, and for his support of Latinx artists. Clark's *Modern Times* series, which Moyer reinterprets in her jewelry, references figures and images from various codices, or pre-Hispanic and early colonial native books by the indigenous peoples of central Mexico, the Mixtecs of southern Mexico, and the Maya of Yucatán, rare due to cultural destruction.[3] He is drawn to this work because of his own struggle of cultural identity, with his mixed non-Latin North American Indigenous and colonial heritage.

Clark's art has been celebrated by the art community in Texas and in Mexico for presenting rich histories in a modern way, and for informing new audiences of the codices' existence. However, as he is a non-Latin artist, his paintings have also elicited controversy for appropriating pre-Columbian

The Golden Ladder, 2018
Sterling, 14k plate, computer print, resin
10 x 6½ x ¾ in.
Image courtesy of Nancy Moyer

imagery. Clark acknowledges his position of privilege, stating: "It's always amazing to me when Mexican gallerists and museum directors tell me 'no Mexican artist would ever paint a *globero* or *vendedor* (balloon man or street vendor). Right now in Mexico, writing or photographing or painting the drug war can get you killed, or 'disappeared.'" Clark acts as an interpreter translating a historic book for modern consumption, while Moyer continues and expands the stories, translating everyday pictures of border life from 2D to 3D.

Moyer states of her translations of Clark's work that she is "using figures about the Meso-American peoples crossing borders as a parallel to immigration." They portray the theater of the border as a view of the national stage mixed with her raw truth. Her seemingly light-hearted representations or cartoons are the vehicle she uses to introduce aesthetic distance from potentially grizzly reality. The *Matamoros Series*, a sub-series of *Truth and Rumors*, features works such as the pectoral *Matamoros December 20, 2009*, which revolves around scenes of cartel violence. This is expressed through cartoons with gunfights and illicit commerce. Many pieces in the series are double-sided, showing criminal behavior and its relationship to money, power, and the fence. One double-sided pendant, *The Understanding*, shows uniformed characters similar to army soldiers or border agents attempting to catch who they perceive to be a potential criminal in Mexico, one who is out of their jurisdiction. On the other side, an exaggerated "criminal" holds a bag of money. The Janus-like portrayal of figures in these scenes helps explain the complex space of the border, using extremes to emphasize power and powerlessness.

Female figures in *Truth and Rumors*, other than those in one large group of photographic images, are depicted as stereotypes, and the exhausted categories of the Freudian Madonna/Whore Dichotomy. These problematic images of female characters, first adapted from a codex by Clark, are employed by Moyer to make comparisons to contemporary political issues through portrayals of contemporary women such as Stormy Daniels. These archetypes, dramatically beautiful and potentially terrible, are beautifully grotesque, much like illustrations of the Mesoamerican Mictecacihuatl, the Aztec Goddess of Death.[4]

A contrasting view of femininity is expressed in Moyer's use of ladder and cross symbols to suggest the effort and hope of those seeking better lives. These icons suggest the spiritual, not physical, representation of women. They are also a reminder of the undocumented and arrested immigrants, and the removal of all their possessions including their rosaries, which are treated as refuse. In the neckpieces *Ladder and Hopes* and *The Golden Ladder*, Moyer adds gold to these primarily silver objects, and the practical and symbolic representation of the ladder. Is this gilding signaling the preciousness of freedom and safety—or the availability of it to be easily bought, if one has the finances?

From the author's perspective, the theme of the running slatted fence also functions as a stage, a prop, and an actor in the work. The rhythmic tines of the fence suggest the regularity of the monitoring of the border. Moyer's fabrication of the fence with its occasional overflow of solder reminds one of the imperfections in the structure of the fence, and emphasizes the problematic reality of the construct. To create dramatic lighting in these scenes, the artist hints with oxidized metal to separate or join night and day. The movement of human beings across the border is metered by the tines, or *dientes*—the "teeth" of the fence. It is as if we are watching a person clicking head counts inaccurately at the entrance to an amusement park.

> Moyer's collection is a significant contribution to the larger setting of border discussions and art, providing a compelling representation by an actual border artist.

The Understanding, 2013
Sterling silver,
digital photos with
resin, optical screws
2¼ x 1½ x ¾ in.
Image courtesy
of Nancy Moyer

The Gateway, 2018
Oxidized sterling
silver, garnets,
digital photos
with resin
11 x 5½ x 1 in.
Image courtesy
of Nancy Moyer

Moyer's collection *Truth and Rumors* is a significant contribution to the larger setting of border discussions and art, providing a compelling representation by an actual border artist, as opposed to the norm of focusing national attention on artists who are not local to this area. For instance, French street artist JR created a massive art installation on the Mexican side of the US border wall.[5] Other artists such as Ron English and Stefan Falke have collaborated with local border artists to create art and national press. Moyer enters the conversation in a genuine relationship with the towns, surrounding monuments, valley artists, and peoples.

Moyer is one of only a few studio jewelers living at the border in the Rio Grande Valley. In the last few years, we have witnessed the vital conversation between jewelers responding to the border through the critical curating of Lorena Lazard and Velvet da Vinci Gallery, with the multiple iterations of the *La Frontera* exhibition (2013–2018). Moyer, whose jewelry appeared in the exhibition, showed but a small example of a larger body of her work.

Moyer's art is predicated on her experience of border life, and her relationships with students and colleagues as a former educator and administrator at the local Hispanic-serving university. Moyer continues to be a champion for the arts regionally as a local art reviewer who writes a regular column, "Surface Treatment," for the *McAllen Monitor*, and frequently interacts with artists from both countries. Moyer approaches the topic of the border from the position of an educator, ally, and amplifier, but her lifetime as a border resident cannot be assumed to be devoid of unconscious bias or automatically grant her permission to appropriate. We must all acknowledge and investigate our specific privilege and worldview, as no single voice makes a discussion.

Perhaps this body of jewelry does not articulate all of the nuances of a theater production, thus revealing all of the Frontera, but it certainly illuminates a view through the window of a witness. Moyer does not want to state her views overtly through words, but masks imagery with humor, horror, and glitz to enter into a critical discussion of her relationship to, and the external view of, the border.

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1 Anzaldúa, Gloria, *Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Aunt Lute Books, 1987. / **2** Paris, Francesca. Produced. "The Historic Chapel at the Heart of a Legal Fight Over the Border Wall," NPR, February 10, 2019. / **3** "Codices." Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture. Encyclopedia.com. June 2, 2019, https://www.historytoday.com/archive/foundations/aztec-god-dead. / **4** "The Aztec God of the Dead." *History Today*, Volume 70 Issue 1, January 2020, https://www.encyclopedia.com. / **5** Stewart, Jessica, "Street Artist JR Ends Mexico Border Installation with Picnic on Both Sides," My Modern Met. October 12, 2017, https://mymodernmet.com.

Installation view of the Koch collection of rings, Swiss National Museum. Photo: Swiss National Museum.

The Ring Collection of A. and L. Koch

Swiss National Museum (Landesmuseum Zürich) Opened 10.10.19, the ring collection is now part of the permanent collections exhibition.

By Ursula Ilse-Neuman

No other form of jewelry possesses the symbolic values and communicative power of the ring, as it is visible to both wearer and onlooker, and part of every gesture of the hand. Constrained to encircle the finger, the ring appears throughout the centuries in many guises, playing a central role in the customs and culture of the time it was made. Wearing rings, and jewelry in general, is in our genes, but when motives beyond personal adornment prevail, great collections may be born.

It was their passion for collecting that motivated Louis Koch, a prominent German jeweler, and his wife Alice to begin assembling one of the world's largest and most significant collections of rings in the late nineteenth century. In 1933, when conditions in pre-World War II Germany posed grave dangers to their safety, the family left for Switzerland, taking their collection with them. Successive generations of the Koch family expanded the collection, and, as a token of gratitude to their adopted country, in 2015 they placed the entire collection of more than 2,500 rings on permanent loan to the Swiss National Museum in Zurich.

The recent presentation of 1,500 rings from the collection, which opened on October 15, 2019, in the museum's newly renovated West Wing, illuminates more than 4,000 years of Western civilization through the lens of this personal yet powerful jewelry form. The museum has employed modern technology to meet the challenge of conveying both the history and the art of the ring over millennia, which Deputy Chief Curator Luca Tori calls "the twin foundations of the Museum's entire collection.[1]

The rings are mounted on rectilinear panels arranged in a stunning circular installation and equipped with precisely calibrated lights that provide uniform illumination of the panels from top to bottom. Digital chat labels vividly augment the appreciation of each ring. Although critics may question the decision to pin wearable objects behind glass like mounted butterfly specimens, given the considerable number of important rings on display and the electronic tools provided to quickly access detailed

information on each piece, the benefits of the museum's approach far outweigh any disadvantages.

On a touch-screen table within the interior space created by the annular cases, images of rings from all epochs appear to float on invisible currents. Visitors can touch the image of a ring to learn more about it, or tap on one of four groupings: "Color," "Materials," "Motifs," or "Epoch." When a finger lands on "Epoch," separate groups of Roman, Baroque, Renaissance, Art Nouveau, or Contemporary rings immediately congregate for a few minutes before swimming off again; another touch and they regroup by a different category.

The majority of the rings on display are historical examples dating from the Bronze Age to the beginning of the twentieth century. In addition to following a chronology, sub-groupings are arranged to indicate the vital roles rings have played over the ages as symbols of love, mourning, faith, or superstition; as signet and guild rings; and as signifiers of status and authority, including two rare and magnificent papal rings from the fifteenth century.

The section from 1945 to the present contains six hundred rings purchased over the last twenty-five years by the fourth generation of Koch family heirs, with the assistance of renowned jewelry historian Beatriz Chadour-Sampson.[2]

Determined to search beyond masters of the field for the innovative and unusual, they acquired works by lesser-known artists from around the globe, producing an admirably diverse assortment of rings. Many of these defy convention, such as the 2003 flamboyant musical ring by Mauritian jeweler Forbes Mavros.

The museum's decision to sort contemporary rings by country belies the breakdown of borders wrought by globalization. Jewelers now freely study, establish studios, and even head jewelry programs far from their home countries, and one is hard-pressed to identify national characteristics within these geographic groupings.

Forbes Mavros
Sense Stimulating Treasure, 2003
Sterling silver, glass beads, resin, acrylic, amber, Tahitian pearl
Musical mechanism: Reuge, Sainte Croix, Switzerland
165 x 110 mm
Photo: Swiss National Museum

Pope Ring
(owned by Pope Pius II during his Papacy 1458–1464)
Gilded bronze, amethyst-colored glass
53 x 43 mm
Photo: Swiss National Museum

The pluralism of art jewelry today is apparent in rings that display architectural or sculptural elements, indeterminate lines or deconstructed forms, or abstractions from nature. Many pieces demonstrate the mastery of cutting-edge techniques such as 3D printing, while the abundant use of unconventional materials is reflected in rings featuring natural sponge, goat hair, wine corks, salt, concrete, as well as found objects and recycled components. A particularly successful piece is American jeweler Kiff Slemmons's 1990 *Digital Tool Box*, which contains four rings with a pencil and ruler.

The Koch collection will be on view for the next nine years, and will no doubt be a major attraction for all jewelry enthusiasts and museumgoers visiting Zurich.

Ursula Ilse-Neuman is Curator Emerita at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York, and an independent curator, author, and lecturer who divides her time between Tel Aviv and New York.

1 Personal Communication at Swiss National Museum, Zurich, November 6, 2019. / **2** Beatriz Chadour-Sampson is the author of the three volume series on the Koch Collection, the latest of which is *Rings of the 20th and 21st Centuries: The Alice and Louis Koch Collection,* Arnoldshe Verlagsanstalt, 2019.

Body Control: jewelry and fashion on the border of human

Shown at the temporary exhibition site De Kerk, Arnhem, The Netherlands
By Museum Arnhem, Arnhem, The Netherlands
11.2.19 – 1.26.20

By matt lambert

Anne-Karlijn, the curator of jewelry at Museum Arnhem, along with design studio MAISON the FAUX, has taken on a monumental task of creating order within De Kerk (The Church in English), which is serving as a temporary offsite exhibition space while Museum Arnhem undergoes an expansion and renovation. Using a church as an exhibition site carries a lot of connotations into the room before the work is even installed, and poses a functional challenge to exhibition design. One thinks primarily of the role the church has played in the control of bodies.

The exhibition is a progression of three spaces: Extra Human, Human World, and Superhuman World, which lead up to and onto the altar of the church. There are also two side rooms, titled Chapel and Education Chapel. The list of makers is a mix of well-known and emerging artists whose backgrounds primarily are from the Netherlands, as well as the U.S., Australia, and other Westernized European countries. The number of works in the exhibition is staggering in relation to the space. While 100 names are attached to works in the exhibition, multiple pieces are listed per name, and duplicated names are placed in different areas of the exhibition. Some artists are showing three pieces per listed area, pushing the number of works far beyond 100. This repetition of the same artists/designers/makers privileges the same voices, and forms a border that omits non-Eurocentric vantage points.

In *Body Control*, the work is displayed on idealized mannequins and body forms in a variety of materials, but all of them rely on Western idealized proportions and gender binaries. For example, hypermasculine forms are used to display Bas Kosters's work, while text talks about gender nonconformity.

The exhibition is framed by custom-designed textiles that are hung from a grid system floating above the display, and are draped over round forms that rest on the floor. The color and pattern shift as visitors walk between the three primary areas of focus. The third and last section, which also encompasses the altar, uses gold textile with smooth, golden, idealized bodies that appear to be rising or falling,

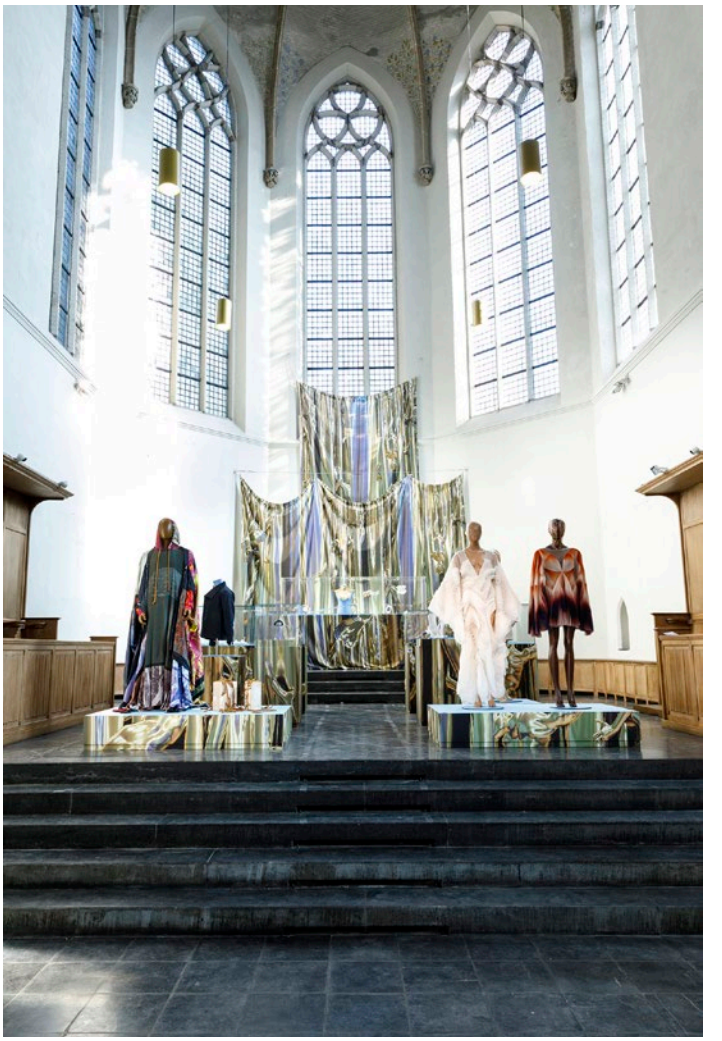

Image of the altar area at the far end of the exhibition. Custom gold fabric with bodies on it continues from the main floor behind the altar and on the sides of the display platforms. Photo: Eva Broekema

View from the exhibition's midway point. Objects are shown directly on organic shaped surfaces as well as being supported by forms while other objects are suspended in acrylic bubbles over the surface. Mannequins display garments and are elevated on similar organic shaped platforms. Custom fabric drapes to section off areas of the exhibition. Photo: Eva Broekema

a reminder of the religious and moralistic connotations of the space, and the idea of ascension to heaven or damnation in hell. Some works are displayed in floating clear bubbles, which only adds to the narrative of vertical movement.

Each main section has text describing the overarching theme of the area, but for each grouping of work, text is only located in an accompanying catalogue, and further information and images are available on a downloadable app. The visitor has to juggle work, paper, and screen, and feels slightly bombarded with information. Some of the text goes as far as to tell the reader how they should feel while looking at the work. As a result, one's personal experience of the exhibition sometimes feels secondary.

Coco Chanel famously declared, "Before you leave the house, look in the mirror and take one thing off." The combination of dominating architecture, overcrowded works, and the busy display provides a disservice to the iconic and fresh work. Smothered by scenography, the exhibition seems not to trust the work to have its own voice and relies on mechanisms of display. As Chanel advised, less would have been more. *Body Control* takes too much control.

matt lambert holds an MFA in Metalsmithing from Cranbrook Academy of Art and degrees in Psychology, Art History and American Studies from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. They are currently an MA candidate in Critical Craft Studies at Warren Wilson College in North Carolina. Lambert is a 2020 Craft Curatorial Fellow with the Center for Craft in Asheville, North Carolina, curating Desire Paths *with co-fellow Lauren Kalman opening October 2020.*

RAW: Craft, Commodity, and Capitalism

Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles
9.29.19 – 1.5.20

By Matthew K. Limb

Every day across the globe, artists and others engage with a variety of materials, whether in their making space, homes, jobs, or within the public sphere. But how often do we contemplate the history of these materials, and the structures of power in which they are entangled? In a globalized, capitalistic world, for better or for worse, I can order raw cotton, indigo dye, or sheets of copper metal through Amazon Prime and have it arrive on my doorstep by tomorrow afternoon. Are we this detached from the very materials that make up so much of our daily lives, and from the making practices and resulting exploitation (both contemporary and historical) that were created to produce and extract those materials?

These are the questions proposed by the recent Craft Contemporary exhibition *RAW: Craft, Commodity, and Capitalism*. Curated by Holly Jerger, *RAW* features ten contemporary artists who work with copper, dyes, porcelain, salt, sugar, and water to explore the historical and contemporary implications of materials under global capitalism. Their intention is to call attention "to the hidden histories of everyday materials often taken for granted."[1]

One of the great strengths of *RAW* is that it is a truly international exhibition. Of ten featured artists—Charmaine Bee, Atul Bhalla, Sonya Clark, Raksha Parekh, Jovencio De la Paz, Ignacio Perez Meruane, Amor Muñoz, Juana Valdes, and the couple Ken and Julia Yonetani—nearly every continent is represented. Each artist uses their chosen material to tell histories of global diaspora, migration, trade, and the exploitation of laborers, and the environment required to produce and distribute these materials across centuries from many areas of the globe.

In Charmaine Bee's *untitled indigo piece #3, portal series* (2017) they stitched together

Ignacio Perez Meruane, *remove (copper art in the Andean world)* (2018–2019), kiln-formed glass, waterjet cut copper, wood, copper ore, and monoprints, dimensions variable. Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles, California. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Noel Bass.

Installation view of RAW: Craft, Commodity, and Capitalism. Courtesy of Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles, California. Photo: Blake Jacobsen

1,458 tea bags dyed in indigo to create a patchwork structure hung in a U-shaped column. Bee's work explores the African diaspora, labor, their own family heritage, and memory. While creating the piece, Bee's thoughts went to the "dark blue indigo dyed hands of the Black women in the Sea Islands who harvested and processed the indigo grown there."[2] The installation allows the viewer to step into the interior space and become fully immersed in both the past and present of indigo's materiality.

Ignacio Perez Meruane's installation *remove (copper art in the andean world)* (2018–19) interrogates a prior exhibition held at the Museo Chileno de Arte Precolombino in 2014 in Chile. While researching the 2014 exhibition, Perez Meruane discovered that the exhibition and museum were underwritten by Minera Excondida, a privately owned, multinational mining corporation that is currently the world's largest producer of copper.[3] In his installation, he provides a visual record of copper use and extraction from indigenous technologies through industrial manufacturing and his own artistic production. This installation acknowledges the influence of capitalistic interests within the web of artistic making. Perez Meruane's installation also nods to the indigenous past, and the impact of global capitalism on these peoples and theft of their lands.

In *RAW*, Jerger succeeds in encouraging viewers to think of craft and its histories not as separate from global capital, but deeply intertwined. Where the exhibition falls short is in its installation. Taking up the top floor of Craft Contemporary's galleries and the museum's foyer, my first observation was the abundance of empty space. For such an important and monumental topic focusing on a global scale, the blank space becomes deeply visible and begs for the inclusion of more artists or a smaller exhibition space. Secondly, the exhibition feels deeply geared toward makers, and misses opportunities to incorporate the public, who may lack the knowledge of the materials and processes in the exhibition. We live in a time in which it has never been more important to think and acknowledge the histories of materials and their relationships to some of the most pressing issues of today: environmental collapse, theft of indigenous peoples' culture and land, the ill-gotten legacies of colonialism, runaway corrupt capitalism, and the continued inhuman treatment of black and brown bodies. Craft is uniquely positioned to lead the discourse on these topics, and in a manner that extends beyond the white walls of the museum.

Left: **Charmine Bee**, *untitled indigo piece #3, portal series* (2017), 1,458 tea bags, fermented indigo, and gold thread, 192 x 144 in. **Charmaine Bee**, *why can't we be friends* (2016–2019), burnt sugar pours and burnt sugar dust, dimensions variable. Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles, California. Photo: Matthew K. Limb

Matthew K. Limb is a Ph.D. candidate at University of California, Santa Barbara.

1 Holly Jerger, "Introduction," *RAW: Craft, Commodity, and Capitalism* (Los Angeles: Craft Contemporary, 2019), 7. / **2** Charmaine Bee, "Artist statement," email, August 30, 2019 included in *RAW: Craft, Commodity, and Capitalism* (Los Angeles: Craft Contemporary, 2019), 38. / **3** Ignacio Perez Meruane, *RAW: Craft, Commodity, and Capitalism* (Los Angeles: Craft Contemporary, 2019), 91.

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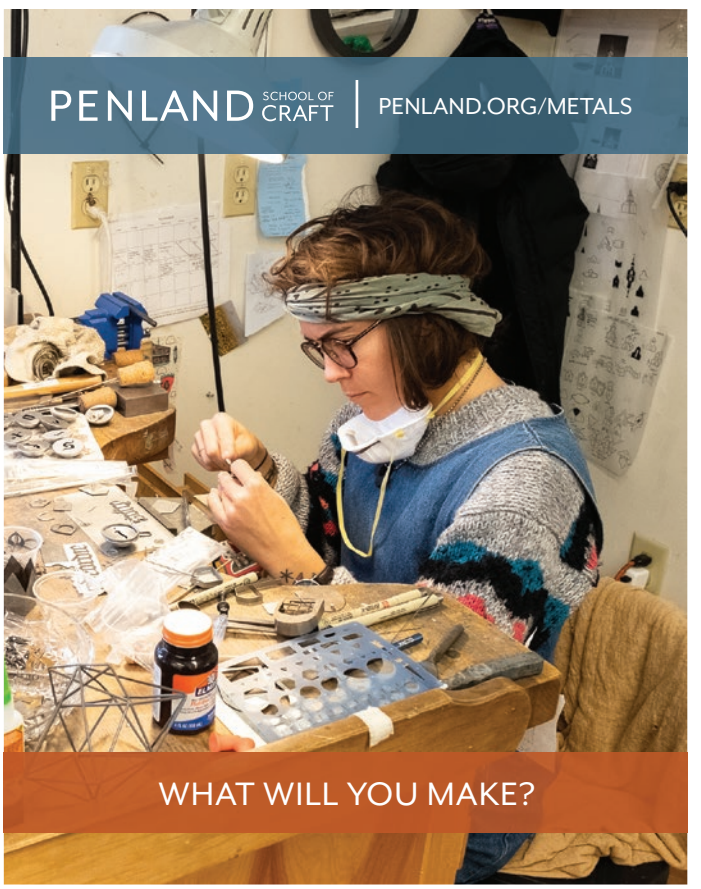

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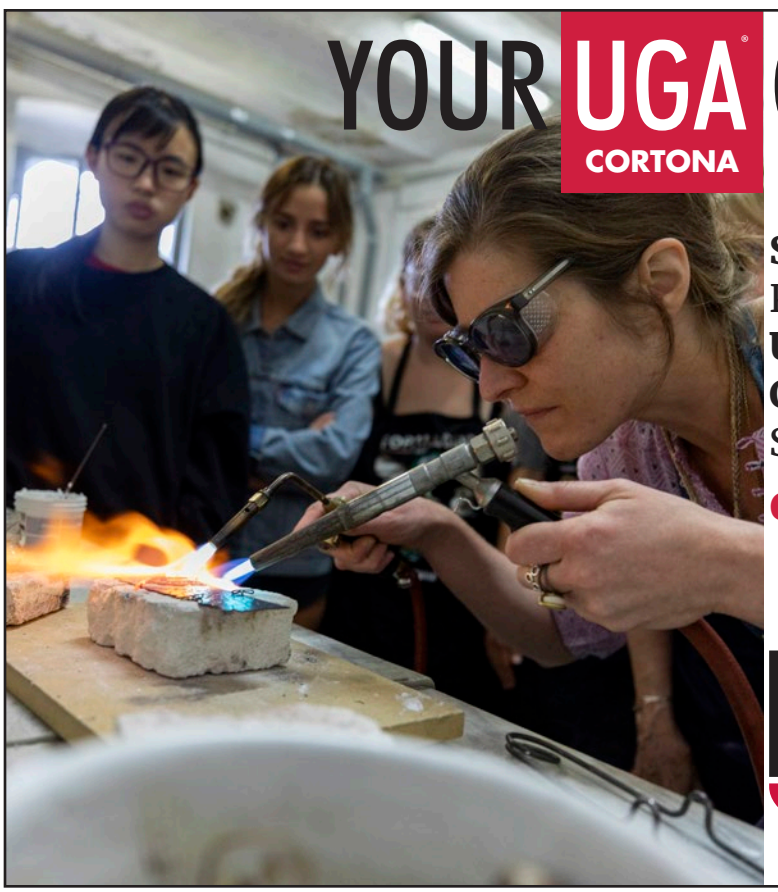

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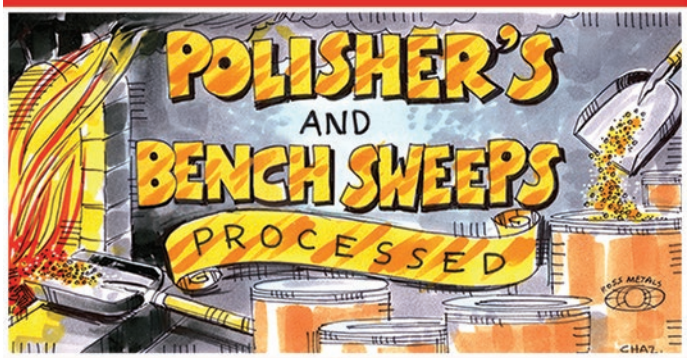

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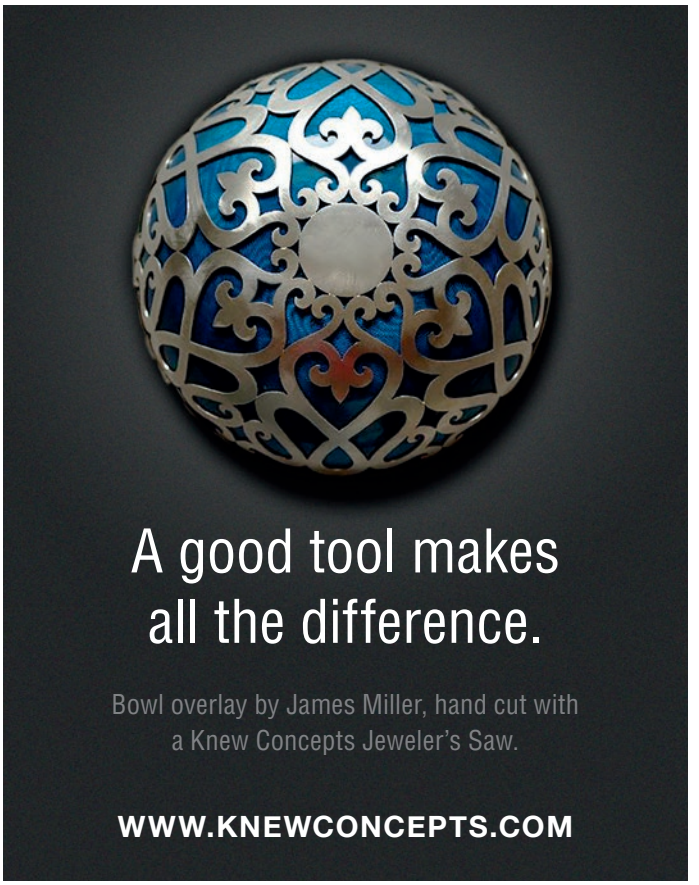

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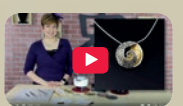

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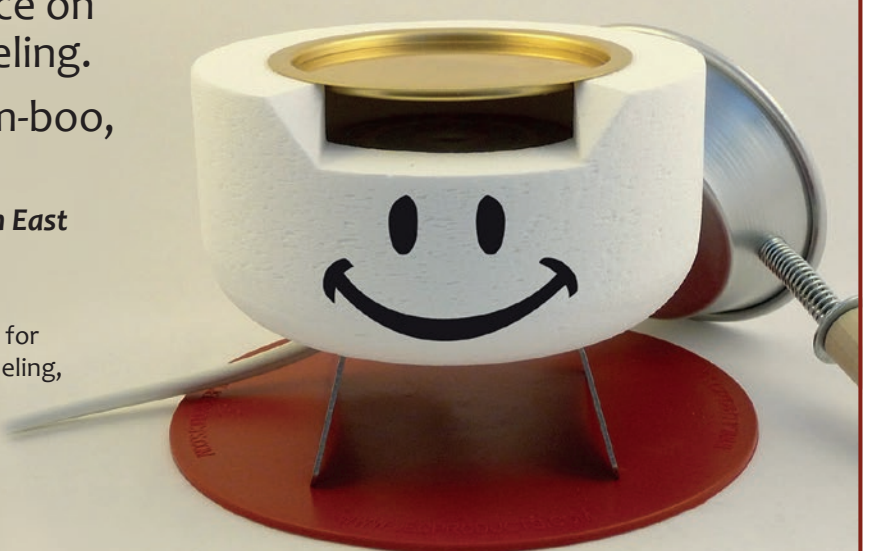

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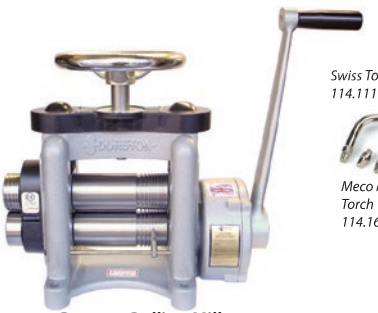

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